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A READER IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES

by William Allen White

SOMEONE should invent a wireless contrivance that will let men speak intelligently across the generations. Man has overcome many of the obstacles which space sets for him, but the handicaps of time leave him battered and speechless at the hurdles of the decades which grow higher and more difficult as one goes back through the generations. How easy it is to go to bookshelves and pull down the volumes of another period and smile at their incongruities. How hard it is to explain that these incongruities were inevitable, how difficult to realize that they reflect the life that was, how all but impossible it is to understand that these incongruities were natural sequences of the life out of which they rose. When a century or two has passed it may be easy for the critic, going back into the books of any ancient day, to interpret that day. The hypothesis of this interpretation will be unchallenged by those who knew the truth. They are dead. But one who has lived in another generation, who has seen the generations pass and their philosophy change, who has seen life moving like a pattern on the weaver's loom, has a harder job than he who delves into the literature of a past that retains no living witnesses.

I am under another handicap in writing these lines. When the popular fiction of the last quarter of the old century was written and published I read it; I enjoyed it; it seemed to me, some of it, splendid and beautiful. It seemed to reflect life between the words. The sunlight of the day that was, perhaps gave these words beauty and reality that they do not hold today. Now as I reread those old books I find that their charm has vanished; the vividness, the truth and glamour of the pages have gone dead and run drab and saddened. I have changed, of course. The philosophy of yesterday has changed. Truth has changed. Man's theory of beauty has changed. His manners and morals have changed. And so the parables of another generation, written to carry home its truth, its sense of beauty, its moral conventions, its tricks and its manners, seem stale and stilted and outworn.

Forty years ago and more Hamlin Garland was a new writer. He wrote of the

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Middle West. He was a Populist, a restless soul. He wrote of the dirt and the dust, the shimmering heat and the stinks of the farm. His people talked in the farm vernacular. His was a protesting voice against the smugness of the pastoral writers who told of the delights of the rural scene. Garland knew of the sweat and the despair, of the futile hopes and mocking ironies of American farm life. He knew how the farmer talked and he set down what he knew. And one day he sent a story to Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, editor of *The Century*. Mr. Gilder wrote Garland a letter about it. Mr. Gilder doubted whether *The Century* could print it because Garland's fictional farmers did not use good English and the colloquialisms which Garland used Mr. Gilder feared would corrupt the youth of his subscribers. He said so, simply and directly; not that Mr. Garland had introduced anything so profane as "damn". It was not profanity, it was loose English, anachronisms, vulgarisms, to which Mr. Gilder objected.

Mr. Gilder was the literary arbiter of the times. His magazine, *The Century*, represented in the mid-eighties and nineties the heights to which American literary culture had risen. The stories he printed carefully guarded youth from contact with reality. Mr. Henry L. Alden was editor of *Harper's Magazine* in that period. He also was a sentinel of the hearthstone. From *Harper's Magazine* no raucous voice could come, no low, earthbound spirits could escape to disturb the serenity of the house beautiful, the home immaculate. Mr. Burlingame of *Scribner's Magazine* held to the same high ideals of the functions of literature that inspired and ennobled Mr. Gilder and Mr. Alden. They were three in one and one in three, a blessed trinity that beamed over the America of that day, kindly lights of literature and learning, beacons that shone benignly unto the perfect day.

Yet there were other voices. Hooting, ribald, outlaw mobs of jeering, brick-throwing, window-breaking literary gangsters infested the lower walks of what must by courtesy be called the literature of the period. The comic papers—and a score of them were scattered across the length and breadth of the land, led by *Life, Truth, Puck* and *Judge* in New York City, hurled their poisoned darts and javelins at the high gods enthroned in the golden editorial chairs. Peck's *Sun* at Milwaukee, the Detroit *Free Press*, Bill Nye's Laramie *Boomerang*, Sam Clover's Estelline (Dakota) *Bell*, the Arkansas *Traveler*, the Danbury *News*, the Toledo *Blade*, *Texas Siftings* and half a score of others, evanescent, protesting weekly newspapers, carried the serious doubts of a young and impudent nation about the infallibility of the holy trinity of Burlingame, Alden and Gilder. A decade earlier Mark Twain had begun to poke fun at the plaster-of-paris perfection in contemporary literature.

Now viewing the situation casually these local spokesmen of the restless dissenters who passed with the eighties seemed to have lived and died in vain. But the nineties came, and with the nineties came new magazines with new editors; the *Cosmopolitan* and *McClure's* and *Munsey's*, whose ideals differed from the loftier ideals of the editors of *The Century, Harper's* and *Scribner's*. Yet the difference was a difference in degree of sweetness and light which they shed, not a new kind of light. Even when certain of these newer popular low-priced magazines went into muck-raking, their fiction for the most part was cut from the old piece of goods which the masters had been weaving.

James L. Ford, who was a pre-Menckenite literary protestant wrote in the early nineties. He was a scorner of the ideals of the times. It was Ford who wrote a skit famous in the early nineties about Richard Watson Gilder. In this skit Ford represented Gilder "within the tabooed district" crawling "cautiously through the barbed-wire fence which was long ago stretched from his sanctum across the city at Cooper Union". Ac-

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cording to Ford, Gilder was "pursuing his studies of what was known in the magazine offices as 'low life' ".

" 'He's just been down to Ludlow street and troo one o' dem houses where the Jew sweaters is.'

" 'And what did he say to it all?' I inquired.

" 'He trun up bote hands,' said the East Sider earnestly."

It was Ford's contention in the middle of the nineties that below Fourteenth Street in New York was a fertile, fallow field, waiting for the artist's plow. It is difficult to realize now in what light and low esteem an opinion like that was held by the arbiters of American literary taste. Not that writing in those days did not have its realism of a kind, but the reality was based upon a philosophical precept, perhaps one might call it a religious tenet, which prevailed generally through the latter half of the nineteenth century and had its roots in an elder day. Those who held this hypothesis believed in a moral government of the universe so well policed that material rewards were always returned for spiritual excellence. When realism dealt with the lower orders as it did sometimes in American writing, realism described more or less meticulously their clothes, their houses, their works and ways, but the deep injustice which often frustrated their inner and spiritual lives was ignored. They were regarded as amusing creatures and the toad on the harrow was not supposed to feel seriously its devastating pain.

To understand the popular fiction of the last quarter of the old century in America, one must go back to the spiritual pabulum upon which the writers of that fiction were fed in childhood and in youth. Even the best of them and most cultured, went as children to Sunday-school. There they learned something more than the Bible and something different from many of the Bible's stark realities. They "took out" Sunday-school books. The Sunday-school books were generally published and distributed under the auspices of the American Tract Society, a Boston concern which thrived in Tremont Street with a branch in New York in Nassau Street. These Sunday-school books essayed fiction and the fiction had one pattern. For it was based upon just one philosophical tenet—that virtue is rewarded by material counters and vice punished by material castigations. When one said that the wages of sin is death there was no nonsense about interpreting death to mean spiritual decay. Death meant death, at least a broken leg or a bashed head or a taut rope or a railroad accident provided by a careful Providence which kept books scrupulously and well with all poor sinners. These pious tales mostly concerned children, good little boys and girls and bad little boys and girls, and the bad little boys and girls were always punished by calamity or lingered in a life of sin and shame, encountering disaster along their painful way to the portals of hell, and the good little boys and girls either were rewarded with great treasure and good fortune or died and went straight to heaven. It was upon this meat that the little literary Cæsars of our seventies and eighties were fed as children. Of course they grew up, read books, perhaps not Sunday-school books, written out in the big world, went to college, came to question, to challenge and to deny the moral precepts that had been pounded into them as youths. But the challenge and denial were superficial. When they set up their universes in their stories or poems, there skulking in the background were the police-court gods with whiskers who someway managed to reward virtue and to punish vice. Rarely was a writer of that gay golden day able to shake off entirely the Sunday-school philosophy with which the American Tract Society had tainted his youth.

One must not mistake the philosophy of that day for a gloomy philosophy, for it was not. Hell was cooling off. The hell of the eighteenth century was pretty well crusted

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over. The skating was good there. Scholarship had justified the mockers and the ribald had their following. Frank Stockton and H. C. Bunner told their merry tales and sold them to the best magazines. But in the merry tales often lurked a poisonous villain or a pestiferous saint, the one to be punished with whips and scorpions, the other to be rewarded by the hand of the king's daughter and half of the kingdom. In the popular fiction of that day were precious few unhappy endings. For unhappy endings would indicate that virtue was unrewarded by material counters or earthly blessings of some sort. Writers were probably intelligent enough to wish that they could end their stories without playing providence to their heroes and villains, but writers knew, and publishers reminded those who forgot, that the public was imbued with the philosophy of a moral government of the universe which punished sin and rewarded virtue with substantial, understandable demerits or earthly tokens of divine affection and esteem.

In the eighties and early nineties, stories began to appear in the better American magazines—better in the sense of being tolerated in the Best Families—which set forth the struggles of younger men with older beliefs, chiefly religious beliefs, or the struggle of young preachers with the flesh and the devil. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps popularized the starry-eyed young preacher who discovered that his sweetheart's shoes were not pinned to the bottom of her skirt and had a conflict between his faith and his sex in which after he yielded he behaved sublimely and died in disaster, leaving the heritage of a noble life. (In parenthesis let us recall that when Mrs. Phelps submitted to the highly psychic Sam McClure her *Life of Christ* Sam returned it with the reflection that what *McClure's* needed and the times demanded was "a bright, snappy life of Christ". Times were changing!) Stories like Mrs. Phelps's were popular. Mrs. Deland gave the hero a little more ginger and, as it were, pepped him up. But he was rewarded properly after apparent failure and providence showed itself intelligently kind. Mrs. Deland wrote other stories of a sentimental character and a decade later took the sex struggle between her heroes and fate into the economic field, where she left some strong stories, *The Iron Woman*, for example.

Mrs. Deland's books had for their background generally some old town with a colonial fragrance still lingering about it. She portrayed those towns shimmering with beauty. Her people were like Corot's trees and sky. The art, the letters, the music of the times all reflected sentimental reality rather than the philosophic reality of the Continental school. Mrs. Mary Wilkins Freeman took New England for her locale, colonial New England, the New England of the fifties, sixties and seventies, and her reality, while hard and cheerless, was always polite. Her tales made heroes of the long-suffering, the patient, the forbearing. She was given to martyrs and she always crowned them. Christian virtue rarely failed to achieve its purpose in her wicked world.

There was a belief in those days among more intelligent Americans in some sort of a conservation of spiritual energy. Thus when writers were compelled by the exigencies of their plots to see virtue fail of a worldly crown, virtue was paid on the books of the day by a due bill on the happiness of posterity where the spiritual forces of time kept in reservoir the welfare of mankind. In the South the stories of the eighties and nineties were chiefly concerned with the contrasts between the South of the old slave-owning aristocracy and the new forces of a South suffering under the blight of reconstruction. Thomas Nelson Page, Harry Stilwell Edwards, F. Hopkinson Smith and, somewhat, Joel Chandler Harris told the stories of decayed agrarians—gentlemen and gentlewomen—proud, beautiful and improvidently kind, wrestling with the harsh problems of an industrial age. Of course the black man was

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in the picture, but always as comic relief, as sprightly as a minstrel, as loyal as Uncle Tom, but never as a human being set apart from the white folks with his own agonies, his own yearnings, his own struggles and tragic failures. The colored man of the last quarter of the old century was pure basswood, all painted and strung on wire.

In the later years of the century, Ellen Glasgow told about the South in new terms. Her *A Man of the People* was the story of the rise of Populism in the South, the political overthrow of the goateed brigadiers. She was one of the earliest writers of her period to dramatize futility into tragedy. She was not afraid of the truth about the South. But her books did not sell as well as those of Mary Johnston, who wrote of the Colonial South and made historic novels out of the wax portraits of the early aristocrats of the Atlantic Coast—either the fox hunters or the leather-breeched pioneers.

Farther west Miss Mary Murphree, who wrote under the pen name of George Egbert Craddock, spun golden yarns of the mountain people and the mountain landscape. But her mountain landscapes were done after the paintings of the period, bright, lovely, gorgeous and—alas—unreal. Her mountain folk spoke a vernacular carefully expurgated even if in dialect, and their emotions, even when highly stimulated by alcohol, were polite enough to parade in public across the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Their more vigorous expletives were not even indicated by dashes and her heroes were a little higher than the angels; they were the Sunday-school children of her childhood, some in rags and some in tags and some in velvet gowns.

Out west were the romanticists, Maurice Thompson, Charles Major, Meredith Nicholson, writing pure romance, Sir Walter Scott done in the middle states, often depicting the post-Revolutionary period. Their books sold in car-load lots.

That was the golden era of the best-seller. One hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, a half-million were not high figures for books like *Alice of Old Vincennes*, *The House of a Thousand Candles*, or any of Charles Major's novels of chivalry. These were mostly stories of mystery or action. They paved the way for the moving picture; indeed they furnished the scenarios of many an early moving picture in the days when moving picture producers demanded wholesome plots. No sex appeal had these huskies of the old century. They rode and fought and ate hearty and died young, did their heroes, and the popular stories of the day contained nothing "to offend the taste of the most fastidious".

Contemporary with them as a maker of the best-seller was Paul Leicester Ford. He moved the habitat of fiction out of the Middle West into New York and New England. He even turned the clock forward, setting his stories in the seventies and eighties in our seaboard cities. He wrote of politics and wrote well, with information and poise. And so along came Winston Churchill with his novels which always had a C in the titles, *The Crossing*, *The Crisis*, *The Far Country*, *The Inside of the Cup*, *Mr. Crewe's Career*, *Richard Carvel*, *Coniston*, historical novels of American politics that had a wide vogue. His books also sold in car-load lots. He was the first of the literary reformers, men who challenged the economic order of the day. These reformers among the novelists were men who understood what the greed of politics was all about, who dared to portray the relation between crooked business and crooked politics and throw a lance at the prevailing plutocracy. In an earlier day—in the eighties—an anonymous novel appeared entitled *The Bread Winners*, which had dared to do this thing. But a generation passed before it became fashionable to follow the example of John Hay who later in his life seems to have admitted the authorship of the story.

Of course the worm was always in the bud. Ambrose Bierce, Edgar Saltus, Frank

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Norris, Stephen Crane, the young revoltés of the nineties, were bitter in their attacks upon the order that was, ribald in their mockery of the Sunday-school philosophy. Even the mighty Howells in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* sensed the truth that a new day was coming, that a modified philosophy was replacing the old. By the end of the century in the last of the nineties the tide was under full swing. Chicago was becoming a center of literary revolt. Stone and Kimball were printing books by younger men, new men in American letters, and Way and Williams, of Chicago, were making beautiful reprints of various British authors who were recognizing the economic changes that were affecting man's philosophy of life. The *Yellow Book* and the *Chap Book* were circulated in a thousand country bookstores and a thousand country towns across America and the ten-cent magazines—the best of them edited by Sam McClure and John Phillips—were beginning an honorable career as muck-rakers. The ice was breaking; the spring thaw was on. The passing of the century marked the end of the old order in American letters.

Looking backward from the close of the first third of this new century into the close of the last third of the old century, a period in which two generations have passed, it would seem as though life then and now were two existences, differing in kind. Yet to one who has lived through the old period into this new day and time, it all seems a continuous, coherent, inevitable, progressive change which is part of one picture. In 1900, Peter Dunne and George Ade and Harold Frederick and Paul Leicester Ford had begun to carp and giggle at the old order, to criticize its fundamental morality, to challenge its philosophy. They were leaders of the young crowd. They had abandoned the Sunday-school library book as a basis of morals. The *fin-de-siècle* God who had lost his whiskers and his job in the police court in the nineties was beginning, in that twilight zone where the centuries met, to be the force outside ourselves that makes for righteousness, which Matthew Arnold had proclaimed. It was an easy step from that God to a law and from a law to a tendency, and thus to a faith in the satisfaction of a good life.

Those were the spans of the bridge. And as American writers came across the bridge, they brought a new realism, even a new romanticism. But the thing I would emphasize is that the change from the 1870's and 80's to the 1930's was not accompanied by a cataclysm. The war had something to do with it, but not everything. Even without the war, what with science peering out into illimitable space and down through atoms into motion, and what with philosophy going through a contemporary revolution, it was inevitable that art should wear a new form and face.

But no miracle has happened. Life and letters today have their firm foundations in the life and letters of yesterday. "Art", said Mr. Longfellow, "is long, and time is fleeting." And the long procession that is moving to the beat of "the muffled drums" is one procession; indeed it ill behooves those of us who are passing the grandstand of the present, today, to hoot at those who marched by yesterday, lest tomorrow's marchers may sneer at us.

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A NOTE ON FRANZ KAFKA

by Edwin Muir

IN AUSTRIA, the country which has remained to our day the most faithful to tradition, there have been two recent writers of religious genius. Rainer Maria Rilke is a poet who by the subtlety of his feeling and the daring intimacy of his thought is more closely related to the English religious poets of the seventeenth century than to any we have had since. He has the same practical temper, and the same conviction that the relation of man to God is not only a mystery, but also a problem. The second Austrian writer, the subject of this essay, had the same temper and the same conviction; but the symbolism he employed was very different; it was not Christian, like Rilke's, nor, though he was a Jew himself, was it Jewish. Franz Kafka was influenced both by Hebrew and Christian thought: by the *Cabbala* no less than by Pascal and the Dane Kierkegaard. The problems which chiefly occupied him belonged equally to Christian and Jewish religion: the problems of divine justice and divine grace. But the symbolical forms which he created for those problems were individual, and indeed almost idiosyncratic. This makes him at a first attempt difficult to understand; but once the preliminary difficulty is overcome, it gives all that he says a more intense interest, the interest of seeing a mind starting from an independent point with nothing but the desire for religious truth, and as if by an inevitable process arriving at the traditional and even the orthodox. By this I do not mean that before he began to write his stories Kafka had not studied religion and theology, both orthodox and unorthodox; he was on the contrary well read in them. But when he sets his two great religious allegories moving, it is as if he were allowing all theological and religious thought to remain for the time in a state of suspension, taking them neither to be true nor untrue; and it is purely through the building up of the allegory that he comes back to them or, more exactly, discovers them again.

Before attempting to distinguish the qualities of Kafka's work, it will be best to give some short account of his life. Born in Prague in 1883, he studied law at the university there and after receiving his doctorate took up a post in an insurance office. After a disastrous love affair he fell ill, symptoms of consumption appeared, and for some time he lived mainly in sanatoria, where he partially regained his health. When the war ended he set up house in Berlin; but the years of inflation came, food was scarce and bad, and his disease laid hold on him again. In 1924 he went to a sanatorium near Vienna, where shortly afterwards he died in his forty-first year.

Mainly at the instance of his friends he had published during his lifetime six small volumes of short stories and fables, all of them curious in content and consummate in form. Before his death he destroyed a great pile of manuscript; but his lifelong friend Herr Max Brod, the distinguished novelist,

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was able to rescue three long, unfinished stories, *The Castle*, *The Trial*, and *America*. Their possession, however, put him in a difficult position; for Kafka had left explicit instructions that, along with all his other papers, they should be destroyed. Herr Brod, for reasons too serious to be treated briefly, but entirely to his honor, refused to obey his friend's instructions, and the three books have since appeared.

As it casts a great deal of light on his character I shall quote from the letter which Kafka left to be read after his death. "Dear Max," he wrote, "my last request is that all that I leave behind me (in bookcases and chests, in my rooms, in the office, or wherever any of it may have got to)—everything of mine in note-books, manuscripts, letters, whether my own or from other people; everything written or sketched which you may have in your possession or can get hold of in my name—shall be burned to the last page unread. Letters which other people refuse to hand over to you they can promise at least to burn themselves." It was as if he were terrified lest any of his errors should survive him, and this is of a piece with his character; for the task he deliberately set himself was to discover the right way of life, and his deepest conviction was that, no matter how scrupulous one may be—and by ordinary standards he himself was fantastically scrupulous—error is unavoidable and, once committed, fatal. It was probably this feeling that made the publication even of a short story or an essay during his lifetime a matter for long and difficult reflection. Yet he did not consider his writings important except for himself. His whole character, indeed, was unusual, yet simple in main outline; for what distinguished it was a uniform intensity which would be content with nothing less than exactitude in conduct and thought, and which to a first glance has an appearance of pedantry.

Those qualities are also characteristic of Kafka's three long stories. These form, as Herr Willy Haas has pointed out, a trilogy corresponding with grotesque differences to the *Divine Comedy*. *The Trial*, which is his "Inferno", deals with a victim of divine justice who does not know even the offence for which he is summoned, and whose judge remains to the end concealed behind an army of subordinate prosecutors and advocates with very questionable credentials. *America*, his "Purgatorio", deals less directly with supernatural powers, and relates the adventures of a German boy who goes to the United States, is exploited by rogues, and falls from one misfortune into another. He is Kafka's most charming character, and somewhat resembles Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*. He is more credible, however, and there is in his presentation, as Herr Brod has pointed out, a touch of Chaplinesque humor. If it were possible to conceive of a perfectly natural boy performing the office of a Myshkin with something of the air of one of Charlie Chaplin's heroes, one would have some idea of this delicious figure. The third story, *The Castle*,* is Kafka's curious version of the "Paradiso", a Paradiso which is never reached. The hero of this story arrives one night at a village belonging to a Count West-West who lives in a castle above it. Just after his welcome at the inn he is asked for his papers, and on the spur of the moment he replies that he has been engaged as a land-surveyor by the castle authorities. The castle is rung up, and to his astonishment he is informed that he has actually been engaged as a land-surveyor. But it is not clear whether the castle authorities are playing with him or not, and the rest of the book is the story of his efforts to be officially owned by the castle as a land-surveyor and to win for himself an acknowledged position in the village. He does not succeed, but at the end when, worn out by the struggle, he lies on his death-bed, word comes down from the castle that though he has no legal claim to live in the village, yet taking certain auxil-

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iary considerations into account he is to be permitted to live there and work there.

For this elaborate allegory there are symbols enough to be found. To Herr Brod, for instance, the castle represents divine grace, so mysteriously granted to some, so mysteriously withheld in spite of their intensest efforts from others; while the village is the community, in which one can find one's true place only by deciphering and following the guidance of God. This, indeed, seems to be the meaning of the fable; yet an allegory has not justified itself if it contains nothing more than its interpretation; and the logic of Kafka's narrative is so close that it builds up a whole particularized system of spiritual relations with such an autonomous life of its own that it illumines the symbol rather than is illumined by it. It is almost certain, moreover, that Kafka put together this world without having his eye very much on the symbol; his allegory is not a mere re-creation of conceptions already settled; and the entities he describes seem therefore newly discovered, and as if they had never existed before. They are like additions to the intellectual world.

America stands somewhat apart from the other two books. The action takes place in time, and the characters have, like Dostoievski's, a mixture of the natural and the preternatural which makes their outlines periodically dissolve and combine again in a continuously more mythical pattern. There are scenes in *America* as good, I think, as some of Dostoievski's, and in this respect better: that they are corrected, even at their wildest, by a fantastic sense of comedy. The fault of the book is that its setting shifts uneasily between the metaphysical and the actual, and that while its scene is a fantastic version of the United States, it occasionally crosses to a province which is not of the actual world at all. It is the most uneven of his works.

In the other two stories, however, the action takes place entirely in this other province, and everything, the characters, the setting, the development, is part of a metaphysical or theological construction. These intellectually fashioned worlds have their own laws and their own geography. Time, space, custom, right and wrong, have undergone a subtle but decisive change; trifles are crucial; subtle questions are more important than general ones; and every motion is judged by a different standard from that of the world. Yet it is difficult to define what principle it is which causes all those modifications, or to establish the laws or the geography of those two worlds; for their validity resides purely in their imaginative justice, and measure in their symmetry. Except for this we have only one clue to lead us through them: Kierkegaard's theory, which influenced Kafka very deeply, of the incommensurability of the divine and the human moral law. With this clue we are led through maze after maze in which everything is changed and yet real; in which every thought is judged by an intuition of the divine law and in which we recognize objects without being able to give them a name; and simply by doing this find that we have acquired a new understanding of the most ordinary and even the most trivial diurnal things. The architecture of those worlds is consummate, and every feature is interesting; for Kafka was a master of construction and of fascinating detail. In realistic novels excessive detail is a defect, for it catalogues things which we could better have imagined; but the author of a purely imaginative world is in the same position as a traveller who has returned from an unknown country, and who interests us more by the faithfulness with which he can describe a native broomstick than by anything else. So Kafka's detail is always fascinating, but it is full of meaning as well; for it is the last working-out of a conception which to be perfect had to inform all its parts.

But more remarkable is the reality with which he has endowed his symbolical characters, for in very few other prose allegories except those of Bunyan have the characters

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while incarnating abstract qualities existed with a life of their own. Kafka's characters are as convincing as Bunyan's, but they live in a world which is far beyond Bunyan's range. The difference between those two worlds can be best indicated by giving the names of the characters who live in them. Bunyan called his figures by such names as Christian, Faithful, Great Heart, Giant Despair, and Mr. Worldly Wiseman, which are the labels of psychological types. Kafka's characters, on the other hand, have titles which indicate their functions; such titles as the Assistants, the Messengers, the Village Secretary, the Village Superintendent, and the Advocates. The reason for this difference is simple enough. Bunyan's sole concern in *The Pilgrim's Progress* was to conduct his hero successfully through all the difficulties which lay between him and his salvation; the road was known, the dangers upon it were expected and prepared for; and so the characters fell naturally into two classes: those who would aid the hero in his journey, and those who would retard him, whether by violence or by false intelligence. But Kafka's hero is concerned mainly with comprehending the order of the spiritual universe, for only by doing this can he hope to find his way, and achieve his salvation; and so the functions of his characters are of far more importance to him than their dispositions. His road, however, is filled with almost insuperable difficulties; for people's reports, ancient legends, one's own intuitions, even the road-signs, may all be equally untrustworthy. Christian began by knowing what all the necessary moves were; but the hero of *The Castle* has to discover them for himself, and has little assurance even when he has found them that they are the right ones. His first attempt early in the story to reach the castle is symbolical of all his later ones. "The way proved long. For the street he was in, the main street of the village, did not lead up to the castle hill, it only made towards it and then, as if deliberately, turned aside, and though it did not lead away from the castle, it got no nearer to it either." And perpetually, in spite of his cunning, the hero is led into sidetracks; perpetually some little involuntary error involves him in discomfort or even in catastrophe; while at other times pure chance seems to set him for a while on the right way. Yet though he strays farther and farther from his path, meanwhile the spiritual order in which he cannot find a place assumes vaster and clearer outline, and a world is created out of his successive failures to secure an entrance to it. Compared with K.'s journey through the infinite complications of the spiritual order, Christian's progress is like a pleasantly eventful walk from one English village to another. Yet the mystery is never accepted as absolute mystery; it is also a problem, certain terms of which are capable of solution, certain provinces of which can be surveyed. Though rejected by the castle authorities, the hero does remain in his own way a "land-surveyor".

In those two allegories, indeed, there is hardly a religious question which is not penetratingly touched. Take for example the passage in *The Castle* where Olga talks to K. about Klamm, who symbolizes one aspect of the Godhead. "We do not often speak about Klamm," she says, "whom I've never seen. You know Frieda doesn't like me and has never let me look at him; still his appearance is well known in the village, some people have seen him, everybody has heard of him, and out of glimpses and rumors and through various distorting factors an image of Klamm has been constructed which is certainly true in essentials. But only in essentials. In detail it fluctuates, and yet perhaps not so much as Klamm's real appearance. For he's reported as having one appearance when he comes into the village and another on leaving it . . . when he's alone he's different from when he's talking to people, and—what is comprehensible after all—he's almost another person up in the

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castle. And even in the village there are considerable differences in the accounts given of him. . . . Now of course all those differences aren't the result of magic, but can be easily explained; they depend on the mood of the observer, on the degree of his excitement, on the countless graduations of hope or despair which are possible to him when he sees Klamm, and besides, he can usually see Klamm only for a second or two." "An image of Klamm has been constructed which is certainly true in essentials. But only in essentials." We are very far here from Bunyan.

Or take the passage in *The Trial* where Josef K., the hero, visits a man who has promised by influence to obtain a pardon for him. Josef K. discovers that there are three kinds of pardon: ostensible pardon, postponement of the case, and real pardon. The first sets one absolutely free for the moment, but at any time one may be arrested again, and the whole case restarted from the beginning. Consequently if one accepts this kind of pardon one is doomed to live in perpetual apprehension. The postponement of the case has the advantage of keeping it permanently in its preliminary stages; but then one must exert oneself to the utmost, engage advocates, give bribes, and throw up any other work one is engaged on. Real pardon, on the contrary, can be obtained by no advocacy or corruption, but solely by the fact of one's innocence. Josef K.'s acquaintance, who has attended the law courts all his life, has had no experience of such cases, but he is convinced that in the past there must have been instances of them, though this is difficult to establish. The whole passage might be superficially taken as a satire on such things as pardons and indulgences; but Kafka's intention is never merely satirical; and he goes on to prove that without those two conditional kinds of pardon the hero's plight actually would be far worse. The description of the advocates for the accused in the same book is equally characteristic. These men are admitted only into an anteroom of the courts of justice and are not even present at the trial; nothing is done for their convenience; there is a large hole in the middle of the floor which has never been repaired, and in which they are always spraining their ankles; they are allowed a very limited competence, and only in the preliminary stages of any case; and almost their sole expedient is bribery, which never has any real effect. This in turn might easily be taken for a satire on the priesthood. Yet without those advocates, Kafka adds, the hero would be in a worse position; for they have some tangential relation, difficult to establish, but by very roundabout ways operative, to the spiritual entities. From these few indications it will be seen that in *The Trial* the helplessness of man before divine justice is described with terrific force. Yet on the other hand every ameliorating circumstance is taken into account, sometimes with a flash of grotesque humor, sometimes in a train of grave and circumstantial reasoning whose purpose is to show that here both despair and hope are inadequate responses. Kafka's temper in treating those most difficult problems remains throughout that of a good, thorough and unassuming workman; and he deals with the material to his hand and measures and puts together his metaphysical worlds with the same painstaking honesty as a mason might build a house intended equally to be worked in and to be lived in.

The main ideas which run through Kafka's work may be condensed into four axioms. The first two are, that compared with the divine law, no matter how unjust it may sometimes appear to us, all human effort, even the highest, is in the wrong; and that always, whatever our minds or our feelings may tell us, the claim of the divine law to unconditional reverence and obedience is absolute. The other two are complementary: that there is a right way of life, and that its discovery depends on one's at-

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titude to powers which are almost unknown. In his two allegories Kafka sets out to discover something about those powers, to prove where he can that they are necessarily right, and to read from his intuition of their nature and aims the only true way of life for his hero. To most modern eyes this must seem from the start a hopeless, indeed a foolish, attempt. The interesting point is that when one surveys it it strikes one as neither Quixotic, nor as lacking in valuable results. It is not only a possible attempt; in Kafka's case it has obviously been a richly fruitful one.

By many of his German admirers Kafka has been called a mystical writer. The adjective seems singularly ill-chosen, however, for the one thing which his heroes never succeed in achieving is a moment of mystical illumination in which their problems might find alleviation. Like Pascal, whom he resembled in many ways—in the daring and solidity of his thought, and in his purgatorial temper—he was a religious genius who, though his faith was unshakable, found little rest in faith; and whose deepest intellectual agonies were caused by the problem of religion itself. He had a singular knowledge of the intricacies of spiritual experience; yet he seems to know them only as possibilities; he remains outside them, as if cut off by an invisible barrier; and his heroes stand in much the same relation to the worlds they traverse as Dante to the worlds in his poem. Sometimes, indeed, his voice has the note of a Calvinist who sees and acknowledges his own reprobation, who accepts the scheme, but is not himself accepted. At those moments his hero seems to be wandering in a vast logical nightmare; the realization comes to him that he has lost his way, the story becomes like a protracted anxiety-neurosis, and one feels the tension has to snap. Then he always starts anew from something ordinary and concrete, from a sober formulation of the hero's ostensible position, for instance: "It may not be much, but I have a home, a position and real work to do, I have a promised wife who takes her share of my professional duties when I have other business. I'm going to marry her and become a member of the community". Coming where they do in the story, those summaries have always an overwhelming pathos; and in general, indeed, Kafka's pathetic effects are secured simply by defining the hero's situation, or by noting that there is a moderate hope for him. The pathos of moderate hopes, which in spite of their moderation are yet worthy of being clung to, even with desperation; this is a province which Kafka has made his own. Those hopes—and this adds to their pathos—are invariably founded on experience. "Once answer a false ring at your night-bell," the country doctor says in one of the short stories, "and you can never repair the damage." Or again—a passage which Kafka afterwards deleted: "If you have the strength to look at things steadily, without, as it were, blinking your eyes, you can see much; but if you relax only once and shut our eyes, everything fades immediately into obscurity". Or, from *America*: "It is impossible to justify yourself if there is no good-will". These axioms do not sound, it is true, like the utterances of hope; yet in their context they do, for there every practical rule, however limited in application, is a help. Their pathos consists in their inadequacy to the vast journey which still lies before the hero, and in the fact that they are founded on experience which must needs be invalid for the problems which will confront him there. Yet they have some kind of use; their existence helps him, even if when he comes to apply them at some future time they will be found mysteriously lacking.

It is a practical temper, a temper which scrutinizes every hope, and yields to no access of despair, which informs all Kafka's work, informs every manifestation of it. It determined the form into which he threw his two great religious narratives: the form of the allegory. For this was the only one

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which by its very structure was bound to carry him forward to the end he set in front of him. In the ordinary religious novel all that can be presented is a description of religious feeling, or a succession of conversations on religion. At best, however, these can only be conditional; we may have subtle religious problems discussed from different sides as in Dostoievski, or complete religious theories outlined as in Tolstoy; but these by their very nature belong to the world of opinion, and not to that of demonstration. All true characters in a novel have necessarily a variety of desires; they may have aspirations for religious truth, but they will have other passions as well; and to the novelist, and rightly, the religious facet will be only one of several, and will concern him only in so far as it is necessary to the completion of his character. Accordingly the novel is a form in which it is possible to describe a religious genius; but it is not a form in which anything can be said about religion. This, however, is what Kafka wished to do. He postulated therefore a hero whose only passion was to discover religious truth; and once that was done the hero's passion was no longer relative, like that for example of the characters in Dostoievski's novels, but absolute, and capable of being logically worked out. The action in his allegorical narratives is a sort of dialectic; one position has to be established before we advance to the next, and every advance takes us in the direction we wish to go. So, I think, for anyone who wants to have a serious imaginative treatment of religion, Kafka is infinitely more satisfying than Dostoievski.

There remains his superb literary art. In the difficult *genre* which he essayed he left nothing partly fashioned, no obstacle which he did not merely overcome, but overcome with apparent ease. Temper, method, style: all are consummate. His diction is of the utmost flexibility and exactitude, and of an inevitable propriety. His conduct of the sentence is masterly. Flowing without being monotonous, his long sentences achieve an endless variety of inflection by two things alone: an exact skill in the disposition of the clauses, and of the words making them up. I can think of hardly any other writer who can secure so much force as Kafka by the placing of a word. Yet in all his works he probably never placed a word unnaturally or even conspicuously. He had, it seems to me, all the intellectual and imaginative as well as the technical endowment of a great writer.

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PRELUDE

by Conrad Aiken

Thus systole addressed diastole,
The heart contracting, with its grief of burden,
To the lax heart, with grief of burden gone.

Thus star to dead leaf speaks; thus cliff to sea;
And thus the spider, on a summer's day,
To the bright thistledown, trapped in the web.

No language leaps this chasm like a lightning:
Here is no message of assuagement, blown
From Ecuador to Greenland; here is only

A trumpet blast, that calls dead men to arms;
The granite's pity for the cloud; the whisper
Of time to space.

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NEW BOOKS FOR MANY CHILDREN

by Katharine Gilmour Landon

CHILDREN deserve just such gifts as are found in some of the new holiday publications. True, compared with the strikingly well-made books that flooded the last Christmas season or two, the format of the new books seems to have been something of an afterthought. No matter. It is a happy year for the imaginative child. Both boys and girls have been met more than halfway by an unusual bounty of good writing. Anne Parrish and Elizabeth Coatsworth have written not down to the children, but for them. Interesting anthologies have been made from such poets as Carl Sandburg, Sara Teasdale and Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Two or three reprints are well met again, and, to crown the good fortune, come new illustrations by the children's beloved artist, Leslie Brooke.

With *Johnny Crow's Garden* and *Johnny Crow's Party*, Mr. Brooke long since captivated little boys and girls, but for several years he has given us no new book. *A Roundabout Turn* has come at last (Frederick Warne. $1.50). Its hero, Toad, is a very real personality. His engaging figure is perfectly expressive of sweet and childlike faith in the sublime possibilities of adventure—a faith that is not dashed by experience, although he looks glad enough to be home in the end. The story-verse is such winning foolery that the author, Robert Charles, must be a particularly pleasant adult. Older readers who want this book for themselves may like to know that the verse originally appeared in *Punch*, and that the book itself, printed in Great Britain, has a distinctly English air. Mr. Brooke designed the cover, and is said to be most exigent about the reproductions of his work. When we saw a few of the original water-colors, we were surprised at the excellence of the published prints. The delicate tints have been faithfully duplicated; only a shade of difference exists here and there. Of course, children will care nothing for these technicalities. They will like the fact that there are lots and lots of pictures of Toad, his wife and friends, a merry-go-round with galloping steeds, and all of the fun and amusing details that characterize Leslie Brooke's work for children. They are sure to like the verse as soon as they are old enough to understand it.

When a book is to be given on Christmas, one must take into wary account the temperament of the child who is to receive it. We are thinking of little girls like Christabel, who is nearly nine, and terrifying in her own estimation of her maturity. Christabel, practical modern that she is, would not condescend to glance at a fairy tale, much less at pictures of a toad. Think well when your gift must go to such difficult young ladies. There will be time enough when they grow older for them to appreciate Toad's exquisite adventure.

To couple new work by Leslie Brooke with more by Beatrix Potter is unexpected luck. *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson*

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From "Hansel the Gander" by Katharine Kuebler; illustrated by Ilse Bischoff. (Morrow.)

(McKay. $2.00) is not just another of those favorite "little" books of hers devoted to Peter Rabbit and his confrères. The story is longer, the book is larger, and children a year or so older will enjoy it. But Miss Potter's unfailing gentleness of humor and imagination play in and about her new story and in the drawings and water-colors. Once again she has caught for us the atmosphere of her England. Little Pig Robinson is led to a tropical isle, but the children will prefer, we think, Miss Potter's more characteristic scenes in which young Robinson goes a-marketing with his basket on his arm, from his home at Piggery Porcombe to the fishing village of Stymouth. The story will please the many children who beg for more from Miss Potter's pen.

Before turning to the picture-books proper we find before us *Floating Island* (Harpers. $3.00). Nor is it at all out of place. Its quality of imagination has a great deal in common with that Leslie Brooke and Beatrix Potter. It is far and away the most spontaneous, childlike tale of the year. Any little girl who likes dolls will make *Floating Island* her own. No one can doubt the truth of the illustrations, for the pictures were all done by Mr. Doll, whose delightful drawing was guided a bit, as any child could understand, by the hand of a grown-up, Anne Parrish, who wrote the adventures too. What a proper wife and mother is Mrs. Doll! She cannot refrain from adding a little note of praise when her husband draws a sketch she admires, or from criticizing him when he does not make their son William sufficiently handsome. Little girls will like to think about the Doll House, with its fascinating furnishings and glorious bathtub that has a water tank with a tiny tap that works. Excitement follows when the house and the whole doll family are shipwrecked on a tropical isle—an idea that bothered us until we discovered what a deal Miss Parrish knows about the tropics and how freshly she introduces us to their wonders. Miss Parrish gives each of the dolls a distinct and winning personality. We believe in them all, even down to the plaster edibles who like to be chosen at mealtime because they know the dolls are much too fond of them to eat them. This is the way that dolls feel and talk and act when humans are not about, you know. A child able to read the book for herself will feel that it was written for her alone.

Now come the picture-books. Several attractive ones offer the children one thing or another that will be remembered for more than a moment's pleasure.

A new departure for babies is *The First Picture Book* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00), in which drawing is replaced by full-page photographs, clean-cut and reassuringly simple. Instead of incomprehensible creatures outside the baby's ken, Mary Steichen Martin has chosen everyday objects with which babies are familiar, on the sound theory that they like best what they can recognize. Most of the objects may be found

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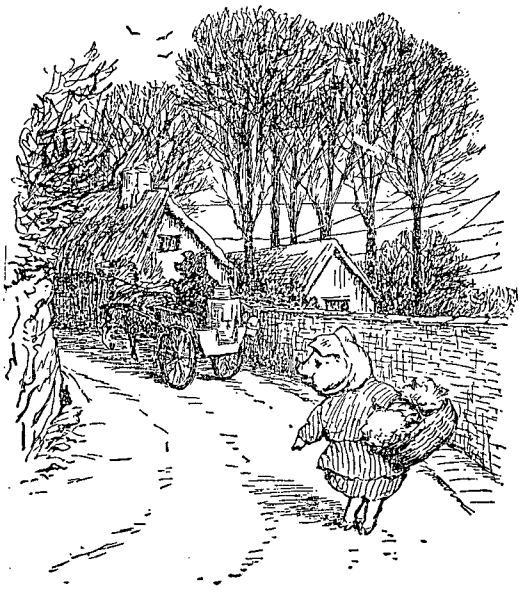
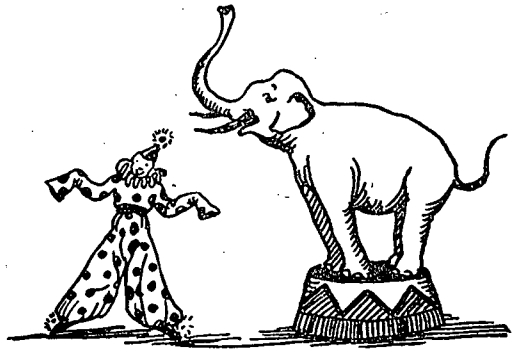
in the nursery of any modern home. In his unique and beautiful photographs, Mr. Edward Steichen has given an almost tangible reality to the high-chair with its silver mug; to brown bread and butter; to a child's brush and comb; to teddy-bear and other daily acquaintances. Many babies between one year and three will pore over the pictures.

The increasing interest in Mexico is notable in three outstanding picture-books with a Mexican background. *Tranquilina's Paradise* (Minton, Balch. $2.50), by Thomas Handforth and Susan Smith, is a fantasy, well-produced with somewhat sophisticated drawings. *The Painted Pig*, by Elizabeth Morrow, with impressive color-work by René d'Harnoncourt, is an account of two Mexican children in search of a painted toy (Knopf. $2.00). In *Pancho and His Burro*, by Zhenya and Jan Gay, American boys and girls may enter in to the colorful life of a Mexican household (Morrow. $2.00). They will understand and enjoy the authentic details and homely incidents that really do differentiate a day in one country from a day in another. They will be interested in the barefooted boy who gathers charcoal to buy himself a straw hat; in the little girl who sells turkeys to buy a singing bird; and they will be amused by the houses of mud, meals of beans, and sleeping quarters of mats under bright-woven blankets. Every page is gay with simple colors.



From "The Tale of Little Pig Robinson" by Beatrix Potter. (MacKay.)



From "Hansel the Gander" by Katharine Kuebler. (Morrow.)

Superficially reminiscent of *The Green Pastures* is the idea carried out in *The Ark of Father Noah and Mother Noah* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.00). According to Maud and Miska Petersham, the Family Noah was a jolly one, and their adventure a splendid lark. It is a point of view the children will relish. The drawings bubble with good humor, and their brilliant colors, so right for a picture-book, have been excellently reproduced. In *To Market! To Market!* (Knopf. $1.75), Emma L. Brock takes the children to Holland as deftly as she transported them to Brittany in *A Runaway Sardine*. The story runs lightly along the selfsame pattern, and the pictures are a perceptive bit of recording in simple colors. *Just Horses* (Macmillan. $2.50) will delight boys and girls who like horses. This is a large and striking picture-book by Katharina von Dombrowski, better known as K.O.S. Her pictures of famous breeds in many lands are competent crayon work. The readable information will interest slightly older boys and girls.

There are new limericks, too, for those who like them, but there are little boys and girls who stubbornly refuse to give a button

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From "Dad and I" by Eva McElevey. (Dutton.)

for the best of them. In *Something Perfectly Silly* (Knopf. $2.50), Marni and Harrie Wood's limericks are uneven in quality, but several about animals are laughable nonsense, and the colors are brilliant. The first-rate book-making is obviously intended to make the volume an effective holiday gift.

Naturally enough, most of the books distinguished by good writing belong to boys and girls past the earlier picture-book age. Appearances are still important, however, and children will be enchanted with the new frame given *The Snow Image* in its recent reprint (Macmillan. $1.00). Nathaniel Hawthorne's fantasy of the girl made of snow, brought into the warmth by a well-meaning father, is an enduring favorite, and the illustrations by Dorothy Lathrop have been done with evident affection. They share the sparkling and crystal delicacy of the Snow Child herself. This attractive book is of a small size especially dear to children.

Among the new writings, Elizabeth Coatsworth's fantasy of old Japan attains distinction. *The Cat Who Went to Heaven* (Macmillan. $2.50) is simple enough in outline, but its prose is rich with overtones of poetry and philosophy. The interwoven legends tell us much of the lore of the gentle Buddha, and of its kindliness to all living creatures. In Old Japan lives an artist who is making a sacred painting for the temple of Buddha. He paints many animals in whose forms the spirit of Buddha once dwelt. It seems that long ago the tribe of cats did insult to this holy one, and so, while the artist's own cat watches the portraits of the animals as they appear on her master's silken scroll, she looks in vain for her own. We wonder until the end how it will be possible to include the sorrowful cat, and are moved by the graciousness of the miracle that finally brings her joy. The black-and-white illustrations represent the work of the story-artist as it progresses. It is another point to the credit of that eminent draughtsman, Lynd Ward, that the animals do indeed appear to come fresh from the brush of the Japanese painter. If tentative limits are helpful, it may be said that children of nine will like the story, and boys and girls of twelve or more may appreciate its subtleties. The book belongs to all readers with well-burnished imaginations.

Let us jump from far-away fantasy to reality here and now. *Emil and the Detectives* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.00) is hoped-for adventure come true—a kind that most young boys would give their hats to have. Emil is a German country boy who finds himself hot on the trail of a flesh-and-blood thief in the bewildering strangeness of Berlin. His pursuit excites the aid of a gang of city youngsters who turn out by the score to catch the Man in the Stiff Hat. The disconcerted thief finds the youngsters omnipresent. They trip him up wherever he goes, but who would suspect that these little boys were self-constituted detectives with a thrilling system of signals, taxis, telephones and secret connivances with hotels and elevators? There is little doubt that the greater part of the incident actually occurred and was gleaned from a news clipping by the author, Erich Kastner, who knew a good story when he saw it. The translation, by May Massee, uses slang in the city boy's own

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manner, and Walter Trier's portrait gallery at the beginning of the book is irresistible. American boys—girls, too—are going to have a grand good time with Emil and his detectives.

All honor to the publishers who have just reprinted, from the old *Strand Magazine*, three groups of stories by the author of *The Bastable Children*. The indescribable spell cast by Evelyn Nesbit's imagination pervades *The Five Children* (Coward, McCann. $3.00). Cyril, Robert, Anthea, Jane and the baby are the sort to whom things happen. Into the midst of their everyday English lives drops the most surprising magic. Miss Nesbit's plots have a way of being not only original but thoroughly satisfactory to childhood. Fancy wishing to be "as beautiful as the day", and instantly looking so seraphic that the servants refuse to believe you are you and will *not* let you in for tea! Imagine wishing that everyone would want your baby brother, and having everyone from neighbors to gypsies so enamoured of him that you have to contend with two kidnappings in a single afternoon! Or the romantic actuality of having your country home turned into a besieged medieval castle. The turn of Miss Nesbit's humor is identical with the children's. They will revel in the confusion that the wishes cause among grown-ups. Miss Nesbit's prose is sheer delight, and is at its best when it is read aloud.

You may have noticed that it is not always easy to find stories for older boys and girls that improve when you read them aloud or when you tell them. In *A Baker's Dozen* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00) are thirteen unusually interesting stories by Frank Stockton, Carl Sandburg, Laurence Housman and other well-known writers, chosen by Mary Gould Davis not only for their style and worth of idea but because, as Supervisor of Story-Telling in the New York Public Libraries, she has found that these tales hold boys and girls about ten to twelve in the telling. The illustrations are by Emma L. Brock. Such impudent wit and good writing as A. E. Coppard displays in *Pink Furniture* are not to be met with every day (Cape & Smith. $2.50). Toby Tottel is a seeker after pink furniture, a symbol of happiness finally found at home. This venerable idea is made to glitter with Mr. Coppard's satire. Although his incessant shafts will fly over the children's heads, the story holds a great deal for certain young readers and has high moments of entertainment for adults.

The Bold Dragoon and Other Ghostly Tales (Knopf. $3.50) is the best of company for older readers—boys, girls and adults—who like the savor of haunts and hobgoblins. Anne Carroll Moore has brought five of the best of Washington Irving's mystery stories out of comparative obscurity into a light they well merit. Many readers will find a new treat in store in the tale of Dolph Heyliger and his Storm Ship, or in making the acquaintance of the guests from Gibbet Island, and they will be freshly impressed with the memorable fact that the shores of the Hudson were once peopled, not alone with the Dutch, but with less earthly crea-

From "The Picture Book of Travel" by Berta and Elmer Hader. (Macmillan.)

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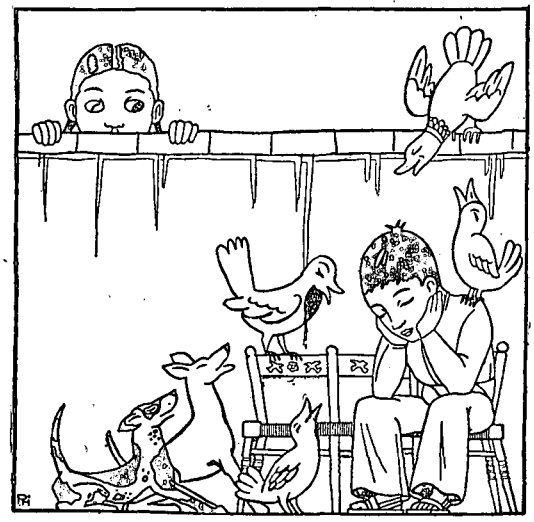
From "The Blacksmith of Vilno" by Eric P. Kelly. (Macmillan.)

tures peculiarly adept at haunting buried treasure. Against this background the drama moves swiftly, thanks largely to the editing of Miss Moore, who has checked the pen of Washington Irving when it grew over-discursive. James Daugherty, the illustrator, is a match for Irving's humor and gusto. He brings the characters before our eyes with his tongue in his cheek, and a satire as kindly as Irving's own. Mr. Daugherty's illustrations are as satisfying here as they were in *Father Knickerbocker's History of New York*.

And here is another handsome piece of book-making, with a spaciousness of type and bounty of illustration befitting the mood of the tales. Eleanor Farjeon, in rendering *Tales from Chaucer* into prose, has given us more of the poet himself than do most translations in poetic form (Cape & Smith. $3.00). Her unstilted style is as far removed from study as the stories were in Chaucer's own day, and the grace of her understanding has brought much of the fragrance of early England into the medium and tongue of another age. "The one excuse for presenting Chaucer in any words but his own," says Miss Farjeon in her apology, "is that he *may* be read, and a taste for him be got by people (especially young people) who would never try to read the foreign language of his English, and so would miss forever something of the fun, the beauty, the wisdom, the humanity, and the romance, in which he stands among our poets second only to Shakespeare." We think that many boys and girls, as well as adults, who do not know Chaucer will enjoy him so much in Miss Farjeon's version that they will choose, sooner or later, to seek for themselves the unmatchable wealth of the original.

Three new volumes of poetry are happily suited to differing young temperaments. The little child's own point of view has been caught to perfection in only one, *Under the Tree* (Viking. $2.50), by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Poetry of no little beauty springs from the honesty of Miss Roberts's imagination, disarmingly childlike in feeling and expression. Her poems will delight children of picture-book age or near it; for the simplicity of vocabulary and metre speak to them in their own language and, rare though it is, they will hear a child speaking of the very things that children really do notice and enjoy. Sometimes we smile at their evident



From "The Painted Pig" by Elizabeth Morrow. (Knopf.)

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truth, as we do when the little girl comments on her Sunday-school teacher:

> Her hat was made of yellow lace;
> Her dress was very soft and thin,
> And when she talked her little tongue
> Was always wriggling out and in.

And then we are moved by the beauty of such true poetry as "Christmas Morning", an exquisite thing told by a country child to whom the Manger of Bethlehem is real and near at hand. F. D. Bedford's illustrations are charming, and the slender volume in its flowered cover attractive.

Several new poems appear in *Stars To-night*, a selection of Sara Teasdale's verse, illustrated by Dorothy Lathrop (Macmillan. $2.00). The poems appeal particularly to young girls, many of whom know such older work as *The Coin*. Aspects of the stars, the seasons, birds, downs and the sea form the substance of Miss Teasdale's imagery, with which, in delicate black-and-white illustrations, Miss Lathrop has shown herself in sympathy. The book is also published in a limited edition of interest to collectors.

From Sara Teasdale to the poetry of Carl Sandburg—the jump could not well be longer, but children's tastes fairly cover the range. *Early Moon* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.50), in its sombre but striking cover, has been ably decorated by James Daugherty and, containing selections from Sandburg's older work together with several new poems, is a satisfactory introduction to this poet. Here are verses from *The Windy City* and *Smoke*

Drawing by Dorothy P. Lathrop, from "Stars To-night" by Sara Teasdale. (Macmillan.)

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and Steel; the fog that "comes on little cat feet"; and the whistle of the boat that

> Calls and cries unendingly,
> Like some lost child
> In tears and trouble
> Hunting the harbor's breast
> And the harbor's eyes.

Some of the subjects are suggested in Mr. Sandburg's remark, "A farm silo, a concrete grain elevator, a steel barge hauling iron ore on the Great Lakes, or a series of tall coal chutes rising as silhouettes on a moonlight night, may any one of them have as complete a beauty as the Greek Parthenon or a Gothic cathedral". The quotation comes from the preface, "A Short Talk on Poetry", an illuminating slant on the subject written by the poet for boys and girls. Children with widening imaginations will find abiding experience in *Early Moon*. Values will remain for them to enjoy as they grow older, for that is a quality of poetry.

From "The Pigtail of Ah Lee Ben Loo" by John Bennett. (Longmans, Green.)

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HENRY JAMES: MASTER DETECTIVE

by V. J. McGill

THE CHARM of the detective story is unlike that of any other literature. The spell of mystery and the gradual unwinding of the fatal solution binds us as does no other form. It humors innocently our morbid curiosity about corpses and secret crimes. It appeals uniquely to our love of an intellectual game. It enforces a feverish attention, and there are few who can resist it. We are like those who linger horribly about the morgue or a scene of crime to probe the pale and startling secrets of the dead. We are also like weird chess players, who, with suspects and evidence for pieces, play pawn against pawn to save knights, and knights against bishops to save queens. It is a game, but there is nothing so real.

The style of the detective story also accounts for much of its popularity. It is natural and convincing, blending the matter-of-fact with the mysteriously horrible, the solidity of reality with the charm of romance, and thus attracts many readers for whom other kinds of fiction have little appeal. It was one of our leading physiologists who first suggested to me the real reason for this uncommon popularity. "Other forms of literature," he complained, "are hard for me to believe and fail to hold my interest when I do believe them. The heroes of most plays," he didn't mind saying, "are simply stupid. The perplexities in which they find themselves are not dilemmas except for ignorant persons, and could be easily solved by a little enlightenment or scientific ingenuity." Why Œdipus should have thought that blinding himself was the best solution of his difficulties, or Werther, suicide, the eminent scientist I speak of could not see. There were other alternatives, he maintained, and more helpful ones. To believe in such characters was to take a view of the intelligence of mankind which was very painful to him. In detective stories, on the other hand, he found much of the common sense and resourcefulness to which he was accustomed in his own laboratory. At this point, he waved his hand at his thousand rats and his elaborate apparatus. It was natural that he should feel drawn to the baffling realities and clear-cut solutions of this scientific type of fiction.

The scientific procedure of the usual detective story is what J. S. Mill has called The Method of Residues—a very famous method employed in notable cases such as the discovery of Neptune, and always involved in any extensive work in science. Take a typical case. A murder is committed while only six persons are in the house. One after another is exculpated, and so removed, leaving the remaining man as the likely murderer. Having fixed upon him as the only one who *could* be guilty, it is usually quite easy to prove the case against him. The distinctive feature of the detective story is seen precisely here. As the hero investigates the crime and reconstructs the conduct or motivation of the criminal, every reasonable alternative must be considered. On the assumption that Mr. X. commit-

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ted murder, what were his possible motives? Assuming that these were his motives, given the scene of the murder, the habits of the murdered man, what were the inevitable steps of Mr. X.? The detective must face the complicated facts and show that, everything considered, Mr. X. could only have acted in one particular way and that no one else could possibly have acted this way. In a perfect detective story the conduct of the subtle criminal could be deduced by the even subtler detective with the greatest rigor, and every act would follow inevitably from the premises.

It is obvious, of course, that this deductive precision is never reached, and seldom even approached, by other types of literature. In *Madame Bovary*, to take fictional explanation at its highest point, a great deal is accounted for. But when the poor woman ends a suicide, it is clear that there were other alternatives; nor could this event be deduced from the previous facts. In view of these other alternatives, the suicide was simply an accident. Such accidents occur frequently in the finest literature and are permitted. They are scarcely a defect in drama or the novel, but they mar the detective story. This follows, indeed, from its very nature. If, according to the detective's final theory, Mr. X. may have left his fingerprints on the gun after, just as easily as before, the murder, then the theory is a bad one. Not only that; it is a serious offence to leave loopholes in the argument or implicate a man on faulty evidence. The detective-story writer cannot afford, any more than a jury, to hang the wrong man. His audience is quick to take offence. An oversight in such a story is almost a hanging matter. Thus, the detective story, through its affiliation with actual criminal procedure, is held to a much higher standard of scientific rigor in explanation than is required of any other literature. Not even the naturalistic novel, with all its deterministic laws, proposes or carries out such finished explanations.

The detective story is, in fact, a kind of science. The author requires a knowledge of human nature and circumstance sufficient for the detection of the criminal. On the basis of certain deductions he must persuade us that Mr. X. is guilty and, like the court, he must take responsibility for the hanging. For this reason, he is obliged to employ every bit of knowledge which might bear upon the case, whether drawn from history, law, medicine, or psychology; nor can he afford to neglect such sciences as archeology and linguistics. There is no science nor circumstance which might not be relevant. Thus, as science advances, the detective-story writer must follow closely, and make learned researches, it may be, to prove his point. Numbers of modern writers in this field, it will be noted, are men of scientific training. Yet, in the very neatness of the detective story, there is a hint of mechanism and broken bells. Fingerprints, telltale dust, a picture ajar, a deep-niched pipe, may serve as evidence and convict the criminal. They do not satisfy our curiosity. In a court room, a man's false teeth or the dust on the shoes he borrowed from a friend may have a startling effect, may serve as links in the detective's proof. They do not answer to our deeper interest. What went on in the mind of the criminal? What were his secret thoughts in those illicit hours of strange excitement? This is our real curiosity, which neither legal proof, nor the circumstantial evidence of detective stories, can ever satisfy.

Of all detective-story writers, it is Van Dine who has done most to gratify our psychological interest. Yet even here we are largely disappointed. Too often the psychological theories are introduced with only a general relevance and no specific application. Certain general principles of human nature may give Philo Vance the clues which point the way to a solution. For the proof itself he must depend upon circumstantial evidence, upon a piece of string or a phonograph record. Of the inner life of the criminal and his victim we gather meanwhile only a skeleton, and only an inkling of their weird rich moments.

These psychological detective stories are fine enough in a nervous, superficial way. For

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the real thing we must turn to an author who is never mentioned in this connection—to Henry James. In his tales and novels we shall find our fill of subtle mysteries and fine-spun solutions, all enacted intricately in the minds of incredibly clever people. The detective here will simply burn with curiosity. Why does the ravishing Mrs. Marden start on occasion and gaze into emptiness with terror? Why does a lady waste and die romantically though she and her lover are on the best of terms? Why does another lady fail through life to meet the young man who, singularly enough, has likewise seen the ghost of a relative? What is the inner fatal meaning? Why is the terribly perfect Mr. Verver so silent and so ominously good? Is he unconscious of his young wife's devotion to the Prince, his daughter's husband, or is he hiding his knowledge to save his daughter's feelings, or, finally, is he giving a sign to his wife of how grateful he is to her for loving the Prince and so leaving him alone with his beloved daughter? What are his thoughts as he walks lonely and imperturbable in the garden? Five minds follow his with uneasy and passionate interest. They are bent on discovering the shade of his mood and the delicate balance of his feelings. The social group involved is very small, consisting of only two couples, but the intricacy of their mutual relations, arising in the web of their high tradition and utter refinement, is simply amazing. Each of these minds has its peculiar mystery, and each probes the others' with an endless gossamer of fine analysis. Over their lives is the shadow of many bewilderments, pierced now and then by their sharp lucidities. In the midst of their subtle social perplexities, every main character of *The Golden Bowl* becomes a most accomplished detective.

But, if such a novel is to be called a detective story, where, it will be inquired, are the murders, the thievish and bloody crimes? These, it must be confessed, do not appear. No one is poisoned, strangled, or shot. No one is offered the slightest violence. Henry James, indeed, treats his characters well. And they deserve it. They are quiet, clever, monstrously intricate people, very much like himself, and far more interested in solving the intriguing mysteries of personalities that confront them in an ordinary polite and cultured life than in murdering or being murdered. James, who fled from an appointment with his revered Maupassant, shocked by the apparent irregularity of his life, would not naturally take to murders. He would regard them rather as crass and lurid expedients to gain the reader's attention, and would consider them more expressive of animal rapacity than of human sensibility. In his tales and novels he avoids these brutal meaningless accidents and confines his delineation to that level of intelligence which is most distinctively human. This was a great point in his esthetics. Mankind, he once said, is not a cage of monkeys. Neither, we might add, is it a nest of thieves and homicides. There are other mysteries than the sudden loss of life. This, indeed, is but a vulgar, blatant mystery; not essential, of course, even to the detective story. The deeper mystery is seen in the elaborate, precious, uncertain contact of minds in their higher moments of doubt and vision. In this province Henry James is the master detective.

We have only to turn to Willard Huntington Wright, alias S. S. Van Dine, to convince ourselves. In his introduction to the anthology, *The Great Detective Story*, he has laid down rather authoritatively those characteristics which distinguish this from other kinds of fiction, and its uniqueness he particularly ascribes to its riddle form. Each detective story, he assures us, is primarily and essentially a puzzle, and "very similar in structure and mechanism to a cross word puzzle. In each there is a problem to be solved; and the solution depends wholly upon the mental processes—on analysis, on fitting together apparently unrelated parts, on a knowledge of the ingredients and, in some measure, on guessing. Each is supplied with a series of overlapping clues to guide the solver; and these clues, when fitted into place, blaze the

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path for future progress. In each, when the final solution is achieved, all the details are found to be woven into a complete, interrelated, and closely knitted fabric". The application of this description to the tales and novels of James is at once apparent. There the problem and its solution are nearly always uppermost, and the fastidious detective with his gimlet curiosity is hot upon the trail of those mysteries which arise in that more delicate interplay of souls, and cling to the filmy iridescence of an idle and cultivated life. In the rich ambiguity of the occasions and the language that expresses them he gathers his clues; he accumulates his evidence from a thousand trifling inflections of mood, and he fashions his fine-drawn integrated solution. And there is only one solution. This is the point about a puzzle that Mr. Wright should have mentioned, if only for his own good. This is its distinctive note and also the ideal of the true detective story. We shall not complain of Mr. Wright's modesty in comparing the ordinary detective story with a cross word puzzle. Indeed, here as elsewhere, he may have his truth. But the stories of James which belong to the same general type are more fitly compared to puzzles in mathematics or philosophy, in which the analysis and solutions are often things of real value.

Mr. Wright's second criterion of this type of fiction is that the reader must *actively* participate in the solution and follow the sleuth narrowly, or even anticipate him, in his winding analysis. In reading most novels one can passively await the dénouement, dawdling along pleasantly enough with the distraction of romance, adventure or love, which at times quite obscures the central theme. In the detective story such collateral appeals to interest "are either subordinated to ineffectuality, or else eliminated entirely. The reader is immediately put to work, and kept busy in every chapter, at the task of solving the book's mystery". The same is true of the novels of James. So strenuous is the participation required in his later works that many readers who think of novels as a means to relaxation have found it too taxing. Indeed it is not the tenuosity of his themes which repels so many readers—for nothing is more absorbing than the passions and perplexities of elegant souls—but rather the greater strain it puts upon the cortex, and the finer demand upon memory and time-span. The story or novel of James is only too hard a puzzle.

In James, likewise, there is little special pleading for the reader's interest. Love, romance, adventure, atmospheric effects, are almost always subordinated to the fine weaving of evidence and the breathless search for the answer. Taste and honesty stand on guard together against the vulgar obsequiousness of special appeals. Often, to be sure, his elimination of irrelevance approaches a sort of bold absurdity, as when the characters of certain stories are denuded of all life and action except in that field where the mystery lies. Thus the hero of *The Altars of the Dead* does nothing, so far as we know, but worship "his dead" and sigh in sad requitement through the weary years before his altar, while the lives of the luckless couple in *The Beast in the Jungle* are restricted for years to their occasional meetings and to the lonely mystery between them. What these people do at other times we do not know, and scarcely care. The elimination of the unessential is carried out here, as in the usual detective story, as a means of intensifying and concentrating the action with the greatest economy of words.

The danger in James is rather that of going too far in this direction. For if too much circumstance is eliminated, the sense of reality also disappears, the baby being poured out, so to speak, with the bath. Fortunately James overcomes this tendency in most of his tales and novels. Through all his flights he remains a realist, after all—as much as Austen or Thackeray, and thus conforms, on his own higher plane, to Mr. Wright's fourth requirement: that the detective story must maintain at all odds a sense of reality. In this matter, indeed, James lives up, quite graciously, to expectations. His realism, like that of the usual

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detective story, is selective, but naturally of quite a different order—yet in that sphere to which he confines himself, he rings with a sharper truth which is all the more precious for being rare and unexpected. In such novels as *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl* he gives his elegant souls, with marked consideration, their loaf and their ground to walk on.

The characters in detective stories and the sleuth himself, Mr. Wright adds, are almost never outstanding figures, for character delineation would detract from the principal process of solving the problem. The characters are preferably pawns, and the detective a mask, with only enough personality to make their motives and movements plausible. Yet when the solution of the mystery depends upon personalities or upon the delicate tints of feeling and mood, he is willing to make an exception. And this is the case, of course, with many of the plots of James which deal with the subtle interplay of minds, and hang indeed upon a hair of difference. Yet even in James the characters are strictly subordinated to the progress of the solution. The figures who people his novels are allowed, in short, only as much character as they can decently use. Any more would be a pointless gratuity. James has created no great characters; he has better things to do. He has a drama to unfold, of fine-woven reciprocations, in which accordingly, a too-outstanding character would disturb the delicate balance and ruin the commutative interplay to which his plots owe all their charm and value. Thus we see that James, though quite above the mechanical level of the customary detective story, still carries on as a first-rate sleuth in the more difficult province of the "stream of consciousness".

But if James is to be accounted a sort of rare detective, is not his genius too remote, are not his themes entirely too rare for a wide appeal? Are his plots only trivial, as some critics have claimed? Is his subtle analysis confined to the commonplace? Is he like leviathan picking up a pea, with the remark: "There is not much point in it, but I can do it?" Nothing could be more mistaken. I call to mind at the moment a number of plots which, for all their elaboration and finesse, are downright melodrama and as exciting as any blood and thunder detective story conceivable. In *The Jolly Corner*, for instance, the heroine drops a hint to Spencer Brydon that she is definitely interested in what he might have been had he remained in New York instead of spending most of his years in Europe. What he might have been! This idea sinks deep in the involved and fancy-swung mind of Brydon. He finds himself haunting the deserted family mansion in the dead of night. What is he searching for? He does not know. Finally, he realizes that at the top of the long dark staircase, *it* is waiting for him. He confronts it suddenly and faints—a frightful monster with terrible marks of suffering and one forefinger missing. It is the ghost of what he might have been had he stayed in New York. As he awakes, the heroine is there to comfort him intricately. She has not really cared for this other—only felt sorry for him.

In *The Private Life* we have another labyrinthine case. There is the elegant Lord Mellifont whose public life is far too successful. The unfailing perfection of his social manners arouses in time a dark suspicion in the two detectives, who arrange at last that he shall be left alone in an open place. As his companion disappears over a hill the social lion simply vanishes. He had devoted such care to his public life that his private life has dwindled to nothing. The two sleuths are delighted with this vindication of their wild hypothesis. Their complementary case is that of the great writer, Mr. Vawdrey, who arouses suspicion by the stupidity of his public appearance. This mystery, too, is solved. The writer's private life has absorbed so much of his time that he uses a double to represent him in public.

In *The Sacred Fount* appears another double mystery. Why does Mr. Brissenden look forty years older than he should, and his wife

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twenty years younger? Does he sacrifice his youth to her that she may bloom by the contrast? The sleuths in the novel devote themselves also to a parallel case. Gilbert Long has been noted for his open stupidity, but has now grown quite clever. Has some devoted woman sacrificed her intelligence to him? To confirm this hypothesis a woman must be found whose intellectual impoverishment matches *his* splendid improvement.

These wonders, it will be evident, are not the blatant mysteries of the court room. Nor are they the mere phantasmagoria they seem. Behind the irony of James's exaggeration are seen the piercing insights of the master detective. Scotland Yard may laugh at the crime detection of the ordinary detective stories and find them frightfully amusing. Psychologists, i.e. students of the mind, do not laugh at James. His labyrinthine analyses, his brilliant studies in motivation and "association" are only too fine and the psychologists know it. Some have even gone so far as to say that Henry is a better psychologist than his brother, William James. Certainly he has made innovations in psychology and in style. Never before was such a style as Henry James's. It has bewildered his readers, it has charmed and baffled them, and it has been the leading inspiration of other writers. Out of its complexity was created an altogether new type of humor. Those who have tired of the homespun, hackneyed clutches of the usual detective story may turn with a sense of rebirth to the sophisticated mode of Henry James. There appears for the first time a humor which depends alone upon the structure of language, a style which is not a parody of other styles, but in itself uniquely droll.

The characters of Henry James direct their conversation to a remarkable degree upon the surface intricacies of life. If they have such downright emotions as jealousy and love, they say very little about it, and some critics, such as Gide, have pronounced them in consequence mere puppets, without souls or "divinity", without the lonely depths. But such critics forget, it would seem, that the way to enhance any emotion is not to talk about it, or else to talk a great deal about its fine-spun implications. It is these alone which give it meaning. The simple classifications of emotions in the customary detective story may serve a purpose, but they rob the soul of its subtlety, which only an endless elaboration can properly reveal. This is the new emphasis in the literature since James, and it is his fine scent for the deeper complexities and ambiguities of the mind which makes him the master detective.

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VALLE-INCLÁN IN THE CAFÉ

by Carleton Beals

THE Café Regina does not differ essentially from other cafés which cluster in the center of Madrid. It is located on the Calle de Alcalá, halfway between the Puerta del Sol—that great hub of national life, from which ten streets ray out to all parts of Madrid and the kingdom—and the Paseo del Prado, where stand the massive national postoffice and the incomparable museum. In style, it is midway between the older places—in which huge crystal chandeliers shimmer on mirror-walls and ceilings, on extravagant Baroque decorations above red plush wall-seats—and those more modern centers, such as El Heñar, which go in for inverted lighting and English panels.

Mingle with the ever vibrant throngs along the Calle de Alcalá, in the shade of the impressively atrocious end-century buildings. Gradually the cafés yield up their secrets. The red plush paradise near the Calle de Mayor is frequented by petty ranchers in black *boinas* and velvet jackets, whose means lift them above the plebeian swirl of the Calle de Toledo, yet whose dress and uncouth manners debar them from better haunts. Near-by is the rendezvous of the bullfighters and their fans. Further down in the avenue, in the Lion d'Or and elsewhere, congregate, *en grande tenue*, military officers in Chocolate-Soldier uniforms, and high bureaucrats, gravely stroking gray goatees. Another café is a vociferous students' center, another is the hang-out of the Republicans; a back-street café harbors the Socialists, and a pretentious place on Conde de Peñalver, the young bloods among the aristocrats.

From wall to chandelier and back bounds talk, magnificent talk. Kings are throned and dethroned. Empires fling cohorts to far colonies; empires are shaken down. Here are the final juries of human achievement: reputations, political, literary, musical, dramatic, receive their final appraisal. More than one poet has been made or unmade by the Last Judgment of the Madrid cafés. A clever word pierces the bombast of a false reputation: the *bon mot* reëchoes, in chuckles that spell ruin, all along the Alcalá. The test of this audience is more arduous and important for a bullfighter than the enraged horns in the ring. Here, too, in these days of official news suppression, is the secret grapevine of rumor, ideas and hope.

Peeping into the Café Regina any evening, one may espy at the crowded tables elegantly gowned French ladies of adventurous antecedents. Yet this café is the pivot of the most significant literary life of Madrid.

Martín Luís Guzmán (the Mexican Boswell of the whirlwind of the Chihuahua deserts, Pancho Villa, whom Guzmán described in his *The Eagle and the Serpent*, and novelist of Mexican revolutionary events as in his *The Shadow of the Chief*) let me into the secret. Don Martín had taken me to visit the Carcel Modelo, at that time overflowing with students unconvinced that Primo de

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Rivera had direct telephone connections with God. We hoped to see Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Spain's greatest living novelist, under arrest for criticizing the dictatorship at some dinner gathering; but he had been released that morning after two weeks of serious illness. Don Martín then took me one night at seven o'clock to the Café Regina, past all the tables of gay ladies and around a bend in the rear, to a long quiet isolated table, where were gathered a group of local celebrities—a *tertulia*, as it is called in Spanish.

At the head of the table sat Valle-Inclán. His slight, one-armed body was erect; his bearing was alert; his massive head was thrown back. He was completely unconscious of his sixty-odd years. His long scraggly gray beard, flowing down over his chest, comes right out of classic mythology. A true son of Cronus, he seems: one arm already devoured, great tooth-like scars on his neck. By some wiry instinct he escaped the gory celestial appetite in order to assert his own godhead. A mane of gray hair flows over his collar; his Galician head rises with a high sweep of brow above thick black eyelashes, broad as thumb smudges; above brown eyes burning from behind horn-rimmed glasses; above an incredibly long, large, slightly humped nose.

As he talked—for no reposeful portrait does Don Ramón justice—his lean fingers combed his long beard; or sometimes they stopped, clutching the strands in frozen dramatic personification of some intense memory. Then, he reminded me of Michelangelo's Moses, there in San Pietro in Vincolo, staring over far spaces in a sort of smouldering fury; and I looked for the two tiny horns. Almost, I am convinced, I saw them on Don Ramón's head.

Those whiskers of Don Ramón are like aerial roots, nourishing the trunk of his ideas, spreading into the flower of the most fantastic and delightful conversation it has ever been my lot to hear. Then his eyes *live*. They hold boundless compassion—and I could understand why old women selling newspapers and beggars and queer street-folk clutch Don Ramón's arm when he passes to ask his advice. For if Goethe talked with coachmen, Don Ramón talks with everybody whose life has been distorted by trouble instead of power. Compassion—but also the devil-may-care gleam of the satyr, the mockery of the devil's advocate, the sharp blaze of passion. Poetry and sarcasm, beauty and sophistry, fantasy and dialectic, clash their cymbals in the nimble talk of Don Ramón. The novelist is never more brilliant than when crushing his controverters in support of an utterly absurd theory; for he has the magic gift of flashing the air-drawn dagger and making Alnaschar dreams more real than reality. I should have liked to have matched his conversational pyrotechnics with those of Coleridge or Huneker.

Younger literary groups have sprung up: but nearly all are off-shoots of the various tertulias of Valle-Inclán, where not since Goldsmith and Boswell gathered about Samuel Johnson has court been held over such a kingdom of Micomicom. Today, the Pierrot imagination of Gómez de la Serna holds forth in the charmingly shabby Piombo under a gorgeous black painting by that little-known, half-mad genius, Solana. Pérez Ayala has another group. Ortega Gasset, another. Jacinto Benavente, too comfortably endowed to linger long in Bohemia, has gone his successful way. Pío Baroja has split off to solitary seclusion. Yet few of the notable intellectuals, painters, musicians and artists but have at some time or other been under the direct influence of the Valle-Inclán tertulia. He was long the terror of the academicians, who for many years warned their students to shun him as a pestilence.

In the gathering to which Guzmán introduced me were E. Diez Canedo, a poet and Spain's leading dramatic critic, graced with a generous and tender irony; the leading portrait painter of Spain, Juan Echevarría, hopelessly, persistently remonstrating at Don Ramón's too-caustic strictures. Present were the

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young poet-novelist, Juan José Domenichina, author of *La Túnica de Neso*; Doctor Luis de Hoyo, professor and anthropologist; Manuel Azaña, former editor of *La Pluma* and the defunct weekly, *España*, which under his guidance became the most enlightened publication of modern Spain. Present were journalists, a banker, business men, painters.

But Valle-Inclán is the real center of the group. Now he is talking of the huge white butterflies of Paraguay, of jungles veiled with enormous dew-drenched cobwebs, spun by enormous spiders, which have provided the design for those snow-white Paraguayan hammocks, "so supple, so fluid, so luxuriously ample as to seem to have life in and for themselves". Or it is the Mudéjar art of Mexico, where colored tiles have advanced beyond their Plateresque and Manuelesque decorative importance to fulfil an integral structural function. Or he is narrating excruciating absurdities of the Seville exposition, then the pet concern of the dictatorship. Or he is razzing the local critics who are bragging chauvinistically how much richer is Spanish than English—because it has a larger vocabulary (*sic*) and because of the philosophic possibilities suggested by the Spanish mystics. "Bah!" exclaims Don Ramón. "Quantity means nothing; if Spanish is superior, it is only because of its elegance, its rhetorical extravagance, its music, its depth, its subtlety. As for the mystics, since they twisted words out of their true meaning to express the inexpressible, they prove nothing."

Pío Baroja, Don Ramón tears limb from limb: the man has no style and can't construct a novel; Pérez Ayala has ideas, but is a barbarous writer; Blasco Ibañez is a charlatan for salesgirls, hence his great success in the United States. But Unamuno has boundless moral courage; and his writing is winged by the strongest pinions of the Spanish tongue—sublime rhetoric. The work of Benavente, if sometimes mediocre, in the aggregate has proven him a genius. Zola is often full of bourgeois monotonies, but the man's passion for justice, as in the Dreyfus case, has lifted nearly all of his writing to greatness. Ibsen, he loathes. Shaw, he appreciates only for his genial irony and occasional Celtic perversities. Anatole France is too lackadaisical. Don Ramón can quote entire pages from Cervantes: there had been no true Spanish stylist since Cervantes until the arrival of Ruben Darío, the Nicaraguan, whose poems Don Ramón knows by heart.

Valle-Inclán never tires of talking of Ruben Darío, who was a personal friend and whose childish waywardnéss forever captured the novelist's imagination. He tells innumerable personal anecdotes of the exiled poet, who flung himself against the windmills of the world and slaughtered prosaic sheep. Two things, according to Valle-Inclán, initiated the modern revival of Spanish letters—the drubbing given the country in the Spanish-American War, which jolted the provincial nation from its opiate dream of greatness; and Ruben Darío, who restored the real music of the Spanish tongue to its literature and smashed the moss-grown pomposity and pedantry which has ruled since the death of Cervantes. Of the *débâcle* of ninety-eight and the coming of Darío were born Azorín, Clarín, Benavente, Blasco Ibañez, Pío Baroja, Unamuno, Alzana, Ariquistain.

"When did you seriously begin to write?" I asked Don Ramón.

"Quite accidentally. I was looking for abandoned copper mines in Extremadura, which had been deserted when the old methods of refining had made them unprofitable. But in recent years, the new cyanide process—" and he launched into a technical description.

"But how did you come to go in for copper mining?"

"To raise funds for the Carlist plot." Thereupon, Don Ramón described the plot, the rifles, how they were concealed, why plans failed. I never did find out when and how Don Ramón began writing. (His first volume, *Femeninas,* was published in 1895; his first verse, *Arómas de Leyenda,* in 1907.) But

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I might have learned much about the Carlist War, if my memory ran to such things. Anyway, it is all in his books. The Carlist War attracted many novelists: Galdós in his *Episodios*; Pío Baroja in his *Memorias de un hombre de acción*; Unamuno in his *Paz en la guerra*. But Valle-Inclán is the novelist par excellence of the Carlist War, not that he ever bothered too much about its political aspects; but it made a magnificent frame for his spirit of adventure, real and literary; for his lyric romanticism; and it gave adequate expression for his great love for his native life in Galicia, where the plot centered.

Don Ramón was born in Galicia, a province long burlesqued in Spain for its uncouthness, its lack of culture, but the one place of the Peninsula where Celtic fancy has never died out. Very provincial, its people are close to humble realities. Its women are magnificent in physique, with red-apple complexions. It is a place of much rain, and Valle-Inclán, as one knows from his novels, long listened to rain's insistent melancholy patter on the zinc sashes of the northwest countryside—like the tick-tacking of some supernatural typewriter, he describes it. The novelist smelled the dampness of his stone house; the odor of old wood and cellar-stored apples—there is a humid richness in his style. He loves landscapes, and the sonorous sweep of his Castilian phrases ever leaps to far horizons. He has used classic Spanish as no other modern Spanish writer has. And so these Carlist and Galician novels are classically simple. The characters are a picturesque multitude, noisy, life-boisterous, spontaneous with color and song—the villagers, the beggars of Galicia, elevated, through intense realism rivalling D'Annunzio's *Tales of Pescara*, to an esthetic level, yet with none of the Russian sombreness. (Spaniards cannot take poverty seriously; rags but intensify their innate dignity.) Caballeros, hidalgos, caudillos, aristocrats, clericals, nuns, fishermen—the life of Galicia is here, told in sonorous periods. I can see Don Ramón stroking his Jupiter beard as I read *La Guerra carlista*. . . . "Everything may be remedied in this life except death. . . . In war, the cruelty of today is the clemency of tomorrow. . . . Unfortunately, in war the most important personage is the devil. . . . That old beggar, trembling beneath her long full cape, seemed made of earth; and the flight of the bats and the sound of the bells that tolled for death, heightened the desolation of that aged shadow who walked quaveringly, aided by a staff, along a twilight path, behind a funeral."

It is difficult to fill in the gaps of Don Ramón's life: he himself is too interested in ideas and scenes and dramatic episodes ever to linger long on a personal theme. Everyone swears he was born with his beard. Sometime or other he descended on Madrid and stormed the tertulia of the Café Madrid, since destroyed to make way for the Crédit Lyonnaise. Here someone has remembered him making passes with his cane, explaining one of his notorious duels, much to the alarm of neighboring tables and passing waiters. In the Café Madrid were Camilo Bargielo, also from Galicia; Godoy, with a Musset haircut; Jacinto Benavente, with devilish moustaches, bald pate, constantly chewing on a cheroot; Ruben Darío, little eyes under fleshy lids, like an automatic Buddha, constantly exclaiming, "Admirable! Admirable!"; Martínez Sierra, the dramatist; Luis Bello, the writer and educator, who these later days has remade the educational map of Spain; González Blanco, the word-shovelling, subsidized biographer and critic; Gómez Carrillo, the inexhaustible romanticist. From the Café Madrid, the reunions passed to the Café de Levante on the Calle de Arenal, which, writes Ricardo Baroja, "had more influence in contemporary art and literature than a pair of universities and academies". From there, the center changed to the Café Regina, where it has survived under the genial despotism of Valle-Inclán in spite of the subsequent shift of the clientele to include the Parisian demi-monde.

Valle-Inclán, on occasions, vanished from

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public gaze, while he toiled on a new *obra*; on occasions he disappeared from Madrid on long voyages—to Paris, where he flew over the battlefields as a war correspondent; to the Americas, to Portugal, Africa, the provinces, Italy. With a divine sense of *tomar el pelo*, of kidding his hearers, his grandiose exploits were never told twice in the same vein or with the same dénouement. Gómez de la Serna once wrote a pamphlet entitled, "The Thousand and One Ways That Valle-Inclán Lost His Arm".

If Galician life provides Valle-Inclán's basic strength, the Americas have enriched his style, his knowledge, his love of the bizarre; they have given him memorable characters such as Tirano Banderas (see *The Tyrant*, recently published in English by Henry Holt); and in his *Sonata*, he has painted Niña Chole, the cruel, sweet mestiza, like a cloying insidious perfume, the girl whom the Marqués de Bradomín (that notable study of a Don Juan who is Catholic yet Voltairian, and enamoured of remote places and ancient times) found in the ruins of Tuzpán, mantelled in a silk scarf, dressed in an embroidered sacred *huipil*, there in a setting of carved stones, beside golden sands, palm trees, Indians, mulattoes with *machetes*, and mule-trains of silver.

In *La Lámpara maravilosa*, American memories also gloss. "The Creole woman of the pampas," he writes, "owes her soul, embalmed in silence, to the vastness of the plain; and if any emotion awakes pagan rhythms in her, it is because of the balsam which burns on the Spanish tongue in a southern sun." His *La Pipa de Kif* and *La Tienda del herbolario* are aromatic storehouses of American colors and perfumes—especially the exotic. Now it is tropical Jalapa, luxuriating among massed vegetation, or Campeche, with its limestone azure shores of bursting surf, or Tlaxcala, seen through a veil of marihuana dreams. Above all, Valle-Inclán hates Argentina and loves Mexico. Mexico, for him, is the Esther among nations. "Two nations are in your breast"—the old struggle of the Indian race against the conquering *encomenderos*, the exploiters, and he adds: "You will realize your destiny when the two bloodstreams are united". Valle-Inclán loves in America its pathetic vitality, its heat and wrath, its combativity, its immense affirmation of sorrow, its hunger for death (south of the Rio Grande).

It would take too long to narrate Don Ramón's amusing life as an actor, part deliberate training for his brief effort at dramatic writing: *Voces de Gesta* (Heroic Voices), a tragedy; *La Marquesa Rosalinda*, a farce; *Cuento de Abril* (April Story), a poetic drama; *La Cabeza del Dragón* (Dragon's Head), a children's comedy. His drama is characterized by racy popular dialogue, by rhetorical resonance, by eloquence. Valle-Inclán's fellow novelist, Ramón Perez Ayala, insists that all of Valle-Inclán's works are written *sub specie theatri*, and cites the constant dynamism of his novels. *La Lámpara maravilosa*, for instance, is a great metaphysical drama in verse between absolute dynamism and the eternally static, in which Bradomín, the principal protagonist, discourses magnificently at the crises of his life in four different settings. Not for the stage, but it is dramatic art. Valle-Inclán refuses to write the psychological novel. He prefers classic models; he dislikes Ibsen, Proust, Henry James.

This carries over into his verse, more preciously rhymed than that of any other Spanish poet. He discards the old loose vowel-rhyme and chooses exact feminine rhymes, accepting all the innovations of Darío and going beyond them. Writes Diez Canedo of the novelist's poetry:

> Above all, the poetry of Valle-Inclán is not superficial. Behind every evocation, something is hid. The words do not exhaust the sensation. No one will stop merely with the image the poet conjures up, because this image brings with it an ineffable train, a complex of suggestions. This, and his tendency to unite in one verse many qualities derived from the other arts, mod-

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ulating it, modelling it, giving it tonal depth, converts him at once into one of the subtlest representatives of symbolism, even more than Ruben Darío himself, for Valle-Inclán is more consistent. Symbolism, with him, does not confine itself to the nostalgia of mysticism, but at times reveals a play of humor, as in a Gothic cathedral, where beneath the spiritual uplifted spires pointing heavenwards, appears, of a sudden, the laughter of a gargoyle.

From Valle-Inclán's four novels, the *Sonatas* of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter (centering upon the adventures of Bradomín), Don Ramón passes on to the novels of Galicia: *Aguila de Blasón, Romance de Lobos,* where he details the rude, feudal strength of the Galician lords, finally subjected by a Catholic queen. Then come his classic Carlist War novels, more simple and direct. Here, there is a powerful eruption of life, of reality, of living history. His most intimate picture of Galician life is found in *Divinas Palabras*, where, in picaresque form, he gives us the thronging on the roads, the beggardom, the superstitious witches, adventurers, cantina throngs, fiestas, public fairs. Here he begins to get away from his previous preoccupation with Spanish feudal life and its sham glories, away from the more conventional novel, and pierces the realities of the lower levels of Spanish society with a grim and fantastic joy. Mysterious cosmic apperception shows through the most menial episodes. These are the novels which he calls *Esperentos.*

Luces de Bohemia continues this vein. It reflects the first difficult days of Don Ramón when he arrived in Madrid scarce knowing where to lay his head. Here, poetic consciousness of the intimacies of life and setting, graphically, colorfully, odorously set forth, interweaves with the swift dramatic movements of his characters, seldom philosophical, but characters over whose actions hover privileged consciousness of universal law, majestic tolerance of human waywardness, hatred of power without knowledge, love of courage, caprice, magnificent gestures. Don Ramón has imbibed Mexican *vacilada* at its source—that recklessness which suddenly, unaccountably takes hold of tame lives and twists them fiercely into violence, courage, preposterous violation of conventionalities.

Don Ramón has been too independent of new movements to receive sensational acclaim. He has been, like Cervantes, too inherently Spanish to be loved by his contemporaries or properly understood abroad. His incisive wit and sarcasm have made him many enemies. He has printed his own books to avoid being robbed by the unprincipled Spanish publishers, and, though ridiculed and reviled by the local press, little by little he won himself a name on three continents. Though not a crusader, he is utterly fearless. He helped found the Ateneo, that center of intellectual light of Spain, and later was jailed by Primo de Rivera for trying to prevent the Dictator's efforts to destroy its purposes and subordinate it to the régime. He was under arrest when I rearrived in Spain last year.

Gómez de la Serna writes of him:

> He enters into the houses of stone and into the huts of the village. On the pretext of resting and slaking his thirst, he listens to what passes in them. He knows equally well the story of the beggar and of the wealthy colonial who married a young girl and was killed by a secret poison.
>
> The late afternoons of great panoramas rule in his work, and one sees there how on his return home, he slackens his step a bit to marvel. In his work are seen vast beaches in the sands of which remain, when the tide recedes, only the print of his feet.
>
> Don Ramón, in the midst of great nature, is the astrologist of flowers, of echoes of things which pass by very far off; and no one knows whether they are phantoms or an overwhelming reality.

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A PORTFOLIO

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

by Ellis Parker Butler

My dear Mrs. Muffick:

Thanks for your letter. I was, of course, vastly pleased to hear that you had borrowed my book, *Twitterings of Spring*, from George Gulp, and I immediately arose from the chair in which I was sitting and turned off one of the electric lights in my living room, for the royalty I would have received from my publisher, had you bought the book instead of borrowing it, would have paid for one electric light for thirty hours, and I will not now get that money.

It was sweet of George to lend you the book and I know his heart must have been touched when you said "George, lend me this book; I stopped buying books when the market slumped", because George knew how expensive your new automobile was. After all, many nice birds and animals go to bed at sunset, and why should an author keep his house all lighted up like a drug-store?

I was particularly pleased when George told me you had borrowed the book so that you might write a paper on it for the Friday Club, because that sort of publicity is fine for a book, but Mr. Blopp, our local bookseller, does not seem to have had increased sales since you read your paper. He has not sold any *Twitterings of Spring*. "No," he said, when I asked him, "I did not stock any more copies of your book; I sold one to George Gulp and he loaned it to Mrs. Muffick, and she loaned it to all her friends, so why should I stock more copies? Who would buy them?"

When Mr. Blopp told me this I came home and took the electric bulbs out of the dining-room fixture, because an author is lucky to be able to eat at all and if he cannot arrange to eat before sunset he does not deserve to eat. And, anyway, I will not be able to use electricity if I do not pay month-before-last's bill quite soon, and how can I pay it if every one borrows my book from George Gulp?

I know from your enthusiastic—pardon me a moment, my wife is calling me——

It was only the electric light man shutting off the electricity, dear Mrs. Muffick. But, to resume—I know your enthusiastic praise of my book, *Twitterings of Spring*, at the Friday Club shows that you have a deep interest in my work as an author, and that you will be pleased to know that my new book, *Mutterings of Winter*, will be published next month, and I know that you will want to read it. May I suggest that you make your arrangements as soon as possible for borrowing it? You might ask me to lend you my "author's copy" because I am afraid George Gulp may not be able to buy a copy from Mr. Blopp. Mr. Blopp tells me he is going out of the book-selling business next Thursday. He is, hereafter, going to sell sausage and other pork products instead of books.

"When everybody borrows books, Norbert," Mr. Blopp said to me, "I cannot afford to stock many books, and when I do not stock many books I cannot have on hand the books people want to buy, so I am unable to sell many books and I am going into the sausage and pork products business. Those who are interested in sausage and pork products do not lend each other pickled pig's knuckles and bologna sausage, passing them

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all around town from one to the other. I may also handle cheese."

I regret that I cannot accept your invitation to talk to the Friday Club next Friday on "The Future of American Literature". The only cloth my wife has been able to find with which to put a new seat in my trousers is a piece of my dear deceased Aunt Emma's Paisley shawl, a piece with a very quaint pattern on it, and your custom of having the officers and committee ladies of the Friday Club sit behind the speaker on your platform makes me reluctant to speak. I am afraid it would distract the attention of the ladies sitting behind me from my address.

Yours sincerely,

NORBERT MORTIMER BLIGGS.

P.S. Now that the electric light company has shut off the current at my house I am afraid I am not going to be able to write as good books as I did, because when I sit down to write I shall be able to think nothing but "How am I ever going to be able to get money to pay the electric light bill?", so I would be glad to know if you have any grass to cut, ashes to carry out, wood to saw, or anything? Terms reasonable and satisfaction guaranteed. Any sort of work. Or errands. If you have nothing else I can do I would be glad to carry back and forth, for a small fee, the books you borrow.

EPITAPH FOR A POET

by Frances M. Frost

He who was devoured
By fierce and fragile sound,
He, whose brain was driven
To fiery and frozen word,
Is now become more silent
Than the throat of a fallen bird
And quieter than the dark
Fir-shadowed ground.

WILD CRITICS I HAVE KNOWN

by Bess Streeter Aldrich

To THE novelist and short-story writer, earning his bread by the sweat of his brain, there looms always somewhere in the shadowy background of his more or less precarious literary existence, a vague personality known as The Critic. One pictures him as a changeable creature: he sneers and emits fire and smoke from his nostrils, or he smiles and sends one red, red roses. Time was when I smiled with delight when he gave me a kiss and trembled with fear at his frown. And now—I no longer tremble. I am no longer afraid. He cannot intimidate me. Under his apostolic benediction he cannot make me think highly of myself. For I have walked boldly up to him and looked him over. He is two-faced. I have him tabulated. By means of the clippings in my press-books I have reduced him to a harmless synopsis.

On a stormy evening a few weeks ago, while the young people in my family were tap-tapping on the floor to the classic strains of " 'Taint no treat in the rumble seat, sittin' by yourself in the moonlight", I tracked the Literary Critic to his lair, and took an inventory of his characteristics. As a result I am no longer under his vacillating thumb. I have a hilarious feeling of freedom. For I have realized how the ogre contradicts himself. One day he says one thing and denies it the next. He doesn't know what he likes. Hi-lee! Hi-low! The proof follows.

These are some of the things the critic has uttered. And, always, in the comparative statements, they are concerning the *same* book or story:

Concerning one book the New York *Times* says: "That there is in ordinary life much interesting, amusing and appealing material for the novelist, Mrs. Aldrich proves anew in this book"; but the *Saturday Review of*

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Literature says: "Anyone who has lived for any length of time in the woods knows that it is peopled with just such yokels as these, but why write about them?" The Boston *Transcript* tells us: "Mrs. Aldrich's crowning achievement in this book is her humor. In a dashing way, touched with gay humor, her lines are very funny"; but the El Paso *Times* remarks: "There is some attempt at humor here, but it is of a formal, cumbersome and trite type". The Glasgow, Scotland, *Evening News* writes: "These characters live and move across the pages like flesh and blood people. They are international in type, for despite their American nationality, they might as well reside here in Glasgow"; after which the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* rises to say: "The book is well written but it is out of joint with the times. Such families existed a generation ago but are as extinct now as the dodo". The New York *World* puts in a good word: "Mrs. Aldrich tells the story of these people with such humor, such spirit, such understanding of human nature, and such unobtrusive recognition of the essentials of happiness and of the dependability of average humanity, that she makes of each chapter a charming sketch, vivid and gay as a water-color painting". But the Parkersburg (West Virginia) *News* thinks: "She writes these stories with a marvellously uninspired pen. One can truthfully say of them that they are wholesome, for they could not possibly inspire to any more criminal activity than yawning". New York *Evening Post*: "We have seldom met more charming, refreshing people". Beaumont (Texas) *Enterprise*: "The book contains the same old stereotyped characters we always have with us". A headline from the Boston *Herald*: "CHARMING ROMANCE BEAUTIFULLY TOLD". A headline on the same book from the El Paso *Times*: "AUTHOR TRIES TO PROVE CABBAGES ARE BEAUTIFUL". Minneapolis *Tribune*: "One of the most pleasing characteristics of this book is the satisfactory way in which the author has rounded out the final chapter, giving a résumé of the characters' lives". But the Philadelphia *Ledger* disagrees: "The book is most artistically handled up to the last chapter, when the author indulges in one of those old-time methods of rounding up her characters and placing them for life". Concerning a short story which made the O. Henry volume, the Atlanta *Journal* says: "Bess Streeter Aldrich in her presentation of 'The Man Who Caught the Weather' contributes the most appealing story in the entire collection. It is done with artistic shadings". But, alas, the New York *Evening Post*: "'The Man Who Caught the Weather' is a slight story related with sticky charm—but it is only fair to state that not all of the collection sink to this level".

How can I longer fear that nightmare of my dreams, The Critic, when in his composite form he makes ponderous statements one day and contradicts them the next? I congratulate myself upon my freedom from his tyranny.

Less flippantly—what is the effect of these contrary criticisms upon the writer? After weeks of conscientious labor upon a short story—months or years upon a book—what are his reactions to these diversified reports? Bewildering. Has he or has he not done a fairly pleasing piece of work? He does not know. There is only one way for the writer to view the whole bewildering report. Caustic criticisms are acids. Flowery commendations are alkalis. Acids and alkalis neutralize each other. One's sense of humor and his poise can keep the barbed shafts from stinging too hard. One's philosophy of life—his sense of his own limitations, his realization that what is being read today will be shelved tomorrow—can keep the laudations from seeming too important. If the writer has done the best he could—interpreted life as he has seen it, lived up to his own ideals, refused to barter his self-respect for thirty pieces of silver, then neither the criticism nor the commendation seems very significant. What is written, is written. And the next task lies before him.

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THE OXFORD MANNER

by Francis Fergusson

I was afraid when I knew I should meet
MacEarl, the Thinker: but he was discreet.
He balanced on his patent-leather feet:
He accepted with commiserating eye
The apology I wanted to imply
For my existence. I did not presume
To fright the silence of the drawing-room;
Nor the heatless fire, the remains of tea:
Confort Anglais, the submarine mystery.
His eyebrows rose politely till I should be gone.
I left him, rocking gently on his evening slippers:
Precariously at ease, plausibly complete;
Undismayedly right, not too effete;
Mouthing the nipple of his pipe in passionate whispers.

BOSTON SHOCKS MOSCOW

by G. A. Miloradovitch

THERE is a lot of discussion going on just now, in print and out of it, about Moscow morals or the lack of them, and most of the talk and writing makes me laugh, though I have to admit that I have no voice—even to laugh with—in this debate, because the land of my birth and of my memories is not the Russia of the Soviet.

The standards and traditions of my class, together with that class itself, have been swept away with other old rot, in the words of a Soviet poet, by an iron broom in the hands of Ilyitch, but not even that son of Ilya, Lenin, and his successors could change the whole spirit of a nation within a dozen years. And I was once witness, long ago, to the fact that a New England spinster shocked a Russian woman.

I have to dip into my memories as deep as a few years before the war, back into a forever-vanished world. I see a large room with a bare, polished floor, high moulded ceiling, panelled walls, deep-set tall windows and not too much furniture—the "children's room", once nursery but now schoolroom. There are four desks in the room, a couple of bookcases, two divans, each facing the other along opposite walls, a couple of easy chairs and a round table. The white porcelain stove, built into the wall and reaching almost to the ceiling, radiates an even heat.

There are four children in the room and one adult. The children's ages vary from ten to fifteen. The youngest and oldest are boys, the middle ones girls. The age of the adult is uncertain even to the Registration Bureau for there is a deep smudge on her passport where the age ought to be. (The children know that because there was some talk about it, but father said it really didn't matter much, since Miss Griggs is a foreigner.) The elder boy is in the uniform of the Imperial Cadet Corps, the elder girl in the demure gray and white of Smolny Institute. It is during the winter vacation.

The adult is speaking briskly—"talking down" to us. Our own governess, whom we love, never talks like that, but she is away for the holidays and Miss Griggs is a substitute, a "make-shift for the time being" as the cadet puts it.

"Now children, we are going to have our nice, cosy reading-aloud time," she says, the tight smile we dislike crinkling her faded face. "Now what were you reading with Miss Stanley?"

"Oscar Wilde," says Andrusho, the cadet.

Miss Griggs repeats "Oscar Wilde!" in a low, shocked voice and then once again on a high shrill note of indignation, and continues in the same key.

"I positively feel inclined to ring the alarm bell! I never permit my pupils to read Oscar Wilde. He is unsuitable for young people."

"I like 'The Young King'," says the younger boy.

"And the 'Birthday of the Infanta'," says the elder girl.

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Andrusho announces with anticipation "We had just begun *Lady Windermere's Fan.*"

Miss Griggs rises to the bait in fine style—"*Lady Windermere's Fan!* I never heard of such a thing! You couldn't possibly have understood a word of it!"

Marusia, the elder girl, says composedly, "Perhaps the two little ones find it slightly above their heads, but Miss Stanley said it was good for their English and they enjoy reading in turn. But Andrusho and I understand it perfectly".

The Cadet upholds her: "Of course. Why not? I understand that women should not run round to men's rooms and leave their fans lying about. No wonder Lord Windermere was furious. I should be furious, too, in his place".

Marusia speaks up virtuously. "When I am married I shall not behave like that—not if I love my husband, and I probably shall. I have a very affectionate disposition."

Miss Griggs sits with her hands clasped on her knees and looks distractedly from Andrusho to Marusia. We two younger ones are enjoying ourselves immensely. We see clearly that Miss Griggs is upset, but, since we can't understand why, there is an exciting sense of mystery about the scene.

"But you are much too young, much too young," Miss Griggs repeats. "And Oscar Wilde is bad for you, in any case. He was a bad man. They had to put him in prison—"

The younger boy catches her up quickly—"What was he in prison for? Was he a political criminal or did he just steal something?"

"He was a bad man," repeats Miss Griggs, but Andrusho starts to speak.

"He didn't steal anything, of course. He was a gentleman, in a way—"

Miss Griggs interrupted. "Andrew! Be quiet! You are not to talk like that!"

Andrusho always hated to be called Andrew, so he turns sulky, but we others let off a whole volley of questions at poor Miss Griggs, who says in that tone of forced cheerfulness which irritates us:

"No, my dears, I positively cannot answer you. We must drop this unfortunate subject. I will go and bring you a perfectly charming book out of my trunk. It was written especially for young people by a New England lady, and it is a sweet and wholesome story, suitable, in every way, for all of you."

"Where is New England?" asks the younger boy.

"It's in North America," the elder girl explains. "It was a New England colony and they revolted because of something about tea. And then they made up the United States and said everybody was born equal and they didn't belong to England after that."

"North America! That's where the Red Indians are! Get the book, Miss Griggs, quick!" cries the younger boy.

"You must say 'Please'," bargains Miss Griggs, but she leaves the room and comes back with a book in her hands, settles herself in an armchair and begins:

"Christmas won't be Christmas without presents," said Jo.

"It's so dreadful to be poor," said Meg, looking down at her old dress.

The younger boy interrupts—

"What's the name of that book?"

"*Little Women*, dear," says Miss Griggs and reads on for a whole dismal hour.

We had been trained to obey the few rules that held the day together, and to listen to English reading during the rest hour was one of those rules, but we were on the verge of mutiny before *Little Women* was half finished. We could not explain why we detested it so, but we squirmed with distaste as Miss Griggs read on. Somehow the book seemed to us to be like Miss Griggs herself.

"If you must read us books written especially for children," grumbled Andrusho, "why not give us *The Jungle Book* or even *Just So Stories*? There's something in them. This *Little Women* stuff is just slushiness."

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"That is not a correct word, Andrew," said Miss Griggs, and went on reading.

Then one day when, as Andrusho told us afterwards, he was preparing to fling a cushion at Miss Griggs the door opened and a lady came in. We were all on our feet in an instant and she was looking from one to another with that from-under-the-lashes gaze of hers which we all adored.

Her dress was not very long, for it was the period when women were beginning to prove that they had feet. Her thick, shining hair was braided over her ears and fluffed over the forehead, her hands were soft and pale and her voice low, vibrating, and held a quaint drawl. She sat down on the nearest divan and patted a place on either side of her in invitation to the girls. The younger boy sat down on the floor at her feet, and Andrusho tried to look as if he did not envy him.

"Continue, Mees Greegs, if you please. You have anothair pupeel—and she will be a good one, I promise you."

But she was worse than any of us. Very soon she said plaintively—

"Will you please repeat, Mees Greegs? It must be that I misunderstood."

And Miss Griggs repeats:

> Going in to exult over a fallen enemy, and to praise a strong-minded sister for the banishment of an objectionable lover, it certainly was a shock to behold the aforementioned enemy sitting on the sofa, with the strong-minded sister enthroned on his knee, and wearing an expression of abject submission.

The latest pupil holds up her hand.

"Oh, I beg of you, enough! Marusia, am I not mistaken still? Does it indeed mean—?" She turns the English words into Russian, hesitating and even blushing a little.

Andrusho answers before Marusia can.

"Yes, Aunt Vera, it means just that, and we all hate the book, but Miss Griggs insists on reading it to us."

The lady looks coldly angry.

"How came you to choose it, Mees Greegs? I regret to ask you before your pupeels, but you have read this—this most unsuitable literature to them. Please explain."

Miss Griggs is voluble and indignant. The book is considered the very best ever published for young people.

"It is in the library at Smolny," puts in Marusia generously, "in Russian. No one ever finishes it, but it's there."

The lady draws her brows together.

"At Smolny? That book! You must be mistaken, Marusia. It could never have been so in my time. Or if so, it must be altered in translation. We shall see."

She rings the bell, and gives orders to the servant who answers it.

"If that book is to be had in Russian at any bookshop in town, we shall compare the original with the translation of that—that deplorable scene," the lady says when the servant has gone. And till he comes back with the Russian version of *Little Women* we pass a more pleasant time than does poor Miss Griggs. Marusia looks up the chapter, puts her finger on the scene that had so deeply offended good taste, and hands the book to her aunt who reads aloud:

> Jo went into the room hoping to exult over a defeated enemy and to praise her sister for being sufficiently strong-minded to refuse an undesirable suitor, but was shocked to see John bend low over Meg's hand and raise it to his lips. Meg did not draw her hand away. She even seemed pleased.

The soft Russian drawl stopped, the lady looked up from the book and spoke in English to Miss Griggs.

"I was certain of it! The vulgarity of the original would not be tolerated in Russian! I am sorry, Mees Greegs, but will you, please, cease to read that book to my children and their cousins?"

Miss Griggs asks in hopeless resignation, "What would you like me to read to them? Surely not *Lady Windermere's Fan*!"

The lady's smile shone alike upon triumphant youngsters and discomfited adult.

"Infinitely preferable, that, I should say.

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Au revoir, darlings! Good afternoon, Mees Greegs."

She is gone. We settle back in our places. Miss Griggs goes to the bookcase and finds *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

HOW MUCH A WORD?

A FORECAST

by Robert M. Coates

I HAVE always been what they call a great reader. Even when I was very young, people used to say to Mother, "My! What a great reader that boy of yours is!" And Mother used to say, "Yes, he certainly is getting to be a great reader, isn't he?"

Now probably a lot of all this was just maternal pride, because after all I don't honestly believe it is possible for a child of ten or eleven years to be a really Great Reader. And besides, that was before the day of the two-pounds-for-a-nickel magazines, and reading itself was still in its infancy.

But anyway, all I wanted to do was to make it clear that I have some claim to authority in the matter which I wish to discuss. And what I want to discuss is the way these authors get paid for the stories they write and which I and you (yes, you!) read. Because it seems they get paid by the word.

When the matter was called to my attention the other day, I literally gasped.

"You mean they get paid by the word?"

"Yes," said my informant, who for reasons of his own doesn't want to be dragged into this, so we must leave him anonymous. "Yes," said he. "That is exactly what they do".

"No matter what word?" I said.

"No matter what word," he said.

"Well!" I said. That was all I could think of to say at the moment.

Because, after all, is it logical? Words of one syllable, by this system, are just as good as any other words—except, of course, those used by a higher-priced writer.

Thus a phrase like "Oscar closed the door" may be worth anywhere from two cents to forty, or even up to a dollar, depending on the rate paid by the magazine in which you read it. And even an "and" by, say, Mr. Peter B. Kyne, becomes of much greater value than an "and" by, say, myself.

Of course, I am not going to pit my "ands" against Mr. Kyne's, nor my "its" against Miss Hurst's. It only occurs to me that an editor worried over production costs would do well to order a stock of "ands", "its", "thoughs", "bys", et cetera, from some lower-priced writer, and not buy his prepositions and conjunctions from the Titans of the Authoring industry any more.

But even that would be begging the question, when what we need is a really sweeping reform, and no ifs nor buts about it. So now I am going to put all false modesty aside and say that an "if" or a "but" by me is just as good as an "if" or a "but" by E. Phillips Oppenheim any day of the week. Is this a free country or isn't it?

As far as I can see, there is only one way to handle this question fairly. Pay by the word, yes; but pay differently for different words! There, in a nutshell, is your solution.

For example, let us say that prepositions are valued at one cent each, or $1.00 a gross. Well, that gives us a beginning. Conjunctions, I should say, ought to be worth a little bit more, because they are usually longer. Put them at $1.50 a gross.

So far so good. But it is with adverbs and adjectives that we are going to have difficulty. You can't handle them in job lots. Take, for example, the word "marmoreal". I ran across it the other day, in a story by A. E. Coppard, and I remember remarking at the time to the man standing next me in the Subway, "This Coppard must have been thinking pretty quick to remember that word right when he needed it".

"This is the station where I get off," re-

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plied the man, whose name unfortunately escapes me, so I could see he agreed with me in the fundamental principles of my theory.

Take "rutilant", or "rubescent". Words like that have much more tone than "red". They should be paid for accordingly. We could even prepare a list, like the butter and egg market, showing current authors' quotations:

	Opened	*High*	*Low*	*Closed*
ambience	$0.14	.18	.12	.15
compact (*of*)	0.22	.22	.08	.09
anodyne	0.11	.17	.11	.16
burgeon	0.04	.09	.03	.08
riant	0.10	.11	.09	.09
marcescent	0.22	.22	.17	.18
moue	0.19	.20	.18	.19
moo	0.02	.02	.02	.02
pastiche	0.13	.15	.13	.14
Archaisms, misc. (doth, wast, ye, etc.)	0.07	.11	.06	.08
German misc. (*Ewigkeit, Sturm und Drang, etc.*)	0.11	.14	.09	.10
French, misc. (*hein! bah! m'sieu, nom d'un chien, etc.*)	0.21	.21	.13	.13

The market opened at a downward trend, which continued, though at steadier pace than marked yesterday's trading. French adjectives went begging, though a few small lots were taken by a syndicate of lady novelists. French interjections were strong, and the heavy bulling led shrewd observers to predict a new batch of war stories next year. The expected rise in archaisms failed to materialize, and some frantic covering was done by those traders who had been buying against the spring crop of poets. Persistent selling forced the bottom out of "Compact (of)", and it dropped to the season's low, hinting that another New School of Criticism will shortly be formed.

Thus everything could be arranged on a business basis, and matters would be simplified greatly. For one thing, I understand, in the old days authors used to spend hours polishing off their sentences and searching for the *mot juste*. Under my scheme, all they would have to do would be to look up the market quotations and there would be the *mot juste*, ready to hand.

It might even work to the advantage of us Great Readers, as well. For if authors get paid for one word, they could reasonably be fined for another. For using Russian words, like "droshky", "verst" and "moujik", I should say the fine ought to be about fifteen dollars per verst. (Cries of "Hear! Hear!")

For making cracks like: "We had some *plifljavrks* (pronounced 'flapjacks'), which is the Malay term for cold parsnips . . .", the author would be penalized ten yards and have to start back among the advertisements. Let's see how much erudition they would show then! (Loud and prolonged applause.)

WHEN WE WERE THIRTY MILLIONS

by Don C. Seitz

THERE were no book clubs in the eighteen-fifties, when, according to the sapient Thomas Carlyle we were a nation of thirty millions, "mostly fools". Were we? Certainly our reading and the quantity we absorbed does not indicate it. Up to the end of 1853, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in the previous year, had sold 275,000 copies. George Palmer Putnam had laid the foundation of his fortunes by reviving interest in the still living but long absent Washington Irving, who thought himself that his stay abroad had extinguished interest in his works, but Putnam was able to show a sale of 144,000 copies, with the *Life of Washington* yet to come.

Soft sob stuff, written by "Fanny Fern", as the wife of James Parton called herself, dubbed *Fern Leaves*, earned royalties on the sale of 45,000 copies. Miss Anne Warner, the reigning female novelist of the day, had to her credit the disposal of 104,000 copies of

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Queechy and *The Wide, Wide World*. These books sold at eighty-eight cents retail, but the lady and her sister, also an author, made enough money to buy themselves an island in the Hudson River just above West Point, where they lived to a very old age.

Donald G. Mitchell, then a young philosopher living at Hartford, Connecticut, and masquerading as "Ik. Marvel" had sold 70,000 copies of the *Reveries of a Bachelor* and its companion volumes. *Alderbrook*, a three volume novel by Fanny Forrester, had a sale of 33,000 copies. They were fifty cents each. Mrs. Hentz, a favorite novelist, was rewarded with the retailing of 93,000 of her products in three years. The travels of John L. Stephens, in Chiapas and Yucatan, where he discovered the Maya ruins, which were sketched by Frederick Catherwood, sold up to 60,000, and his travels in Egypt, Greece and the Holy Land rose to 80,000. Harper and Brothers were his fortunate publishers. The Holy Land possessed great interest. Lieutenant W. F. Lynch's *Explorations of the River Jordan and the Red Sea* in a three dollar edition went to 15,000, and a cheaper issue sold 8,000. Six volumes of the works of Daniel Webster, not long dead, had a sale of 46,800 at two dollars per volume. Dr. John Frost, popular historian, father of the modern artist, A. B. Frost, produced a *Pictorial History of the World* that sold off-hand 60,000 at three dollars. There were three of these. George W. Kendall's *Expedition to Santa Fé*, on which he was made prisoner and taken to the City of Mexico, rewarded him with a forty thousand sale and was republished in England. The biggest killer was James T. Headley's *Napoleon and his Marshals*, with a 200,000 sale that went to the benefit of Harper and Brothers. Seward's *Life of John Quincy Adams* ran up to 30,000 —a good book for a dollar.

Carlyle's "fools" bought a prodigious issue of the *Encyclopedia Americana* in fourteen volumes at two dollars per—280,000. The twenty-five volumes of Jared Sparks's *American Biography* had a sale of 100,000 volumes at seventy-five cents apiece. Dr. Griswold's three volumes of *Poets and Prose Writers of America* sold 21,000 volumes at three dollars each. The humorous books by A. B. Longstreet, a Georgia judge, *Major Jones' Courtship*, and *Major Jones' Travels*, ran up to 31,000, but at fifty cents.

Religious works were in enormous demand. Barnes's *Notes on the Gospels* led the record—300,000 at seventy-five cents. Aiken's *Christian Minstrel* sold forty thousand in two years. Three volumes of *Alexander on the Psalms* had a ten thousand sale. William H. Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* and kindred works were reputed to have sold 160,000 copies.

Law books were in such demand that Supreme Court Justice Isaac Story was said to receive eight thousand dollars a year in royalties from his writings. Chancellor James Kent's *Commentaries* had sold 84,000 volumes. Medical books were also best sellers. Wood and Bache's *Medical Dispensatory* had a 60,000 sale at five dollars. Duglinson's *Medical Writings* rivalled this record with 50,000.

Leslie's cookery and receipt books had a 96,000 sale, while works on horticulture and farming were in great demand. Downing's *Fruits and Fruit Trees*, still a standard, sold 15,000 copies and a varied further line, put out by the same authority, over 21,000.

"Pete Varley's" moral books went into huge editions. His seventy-five cent histories sold by the hundred thousand. He was a Connecticut man named S. G. Goodrich. John S. C. Abbott had passed the 400,000 mark with his histories. Mitchell's geographies were taken at the rate of 400,000 a year. Of the Boston Academy's *Collection of Sacred Music* 600,000 were sold at one dollar each. Professor Anthon's classical text books gave him a revenue on 50,000 copies per annum. People paid five dollars each for 25,000 Liddell and Scott's *Greek Lexicons*. Anthon's *Classical Dictionary* had an immediate sale

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of 30,000, while Webster's Dictionary in quarto form at six dollars was bought to the extent of 80,000. The three-fifty octavo edition sold 250,000 as a starter.

Ten editions of Longfellow's *Poems* had been absorbed. William Cullen Bryant was doing well and Hawthorne had already come into his own. George William Curtis was winning fame and fortune with his lightly written novels and travel books. Nathaniel P. Willis had a large and profitable following. The public "ate up" young Bayard Taylor's *Travels*. They seem dull today.

In addition to all this the "fools" were absorbing an astonishing amount of foreign brain food, including Carlyle, who found his best market here. In five years 80,000 volumes of *Modern British Essayists* were disposed of to American readers. Lord Macaulay's *Miscellanies* had a sale of 60,000. In two years 100,000 copies of Grace Aguilar's writings were purchased. Who reads them now? Dickens was swamping the country. Thackeray was said to be selling three times as well in America as in England. We took 50,000 copies of Murray's *Encyclopedia of Geography*. McCulloch's *Commercial Dictionary* had a ten thousand sale. Bulwer-Lytton's latest novel sold 30,000 on its first American reprint. Within a few months, Alexander Smith's Poems went to 10,000. Who was he?

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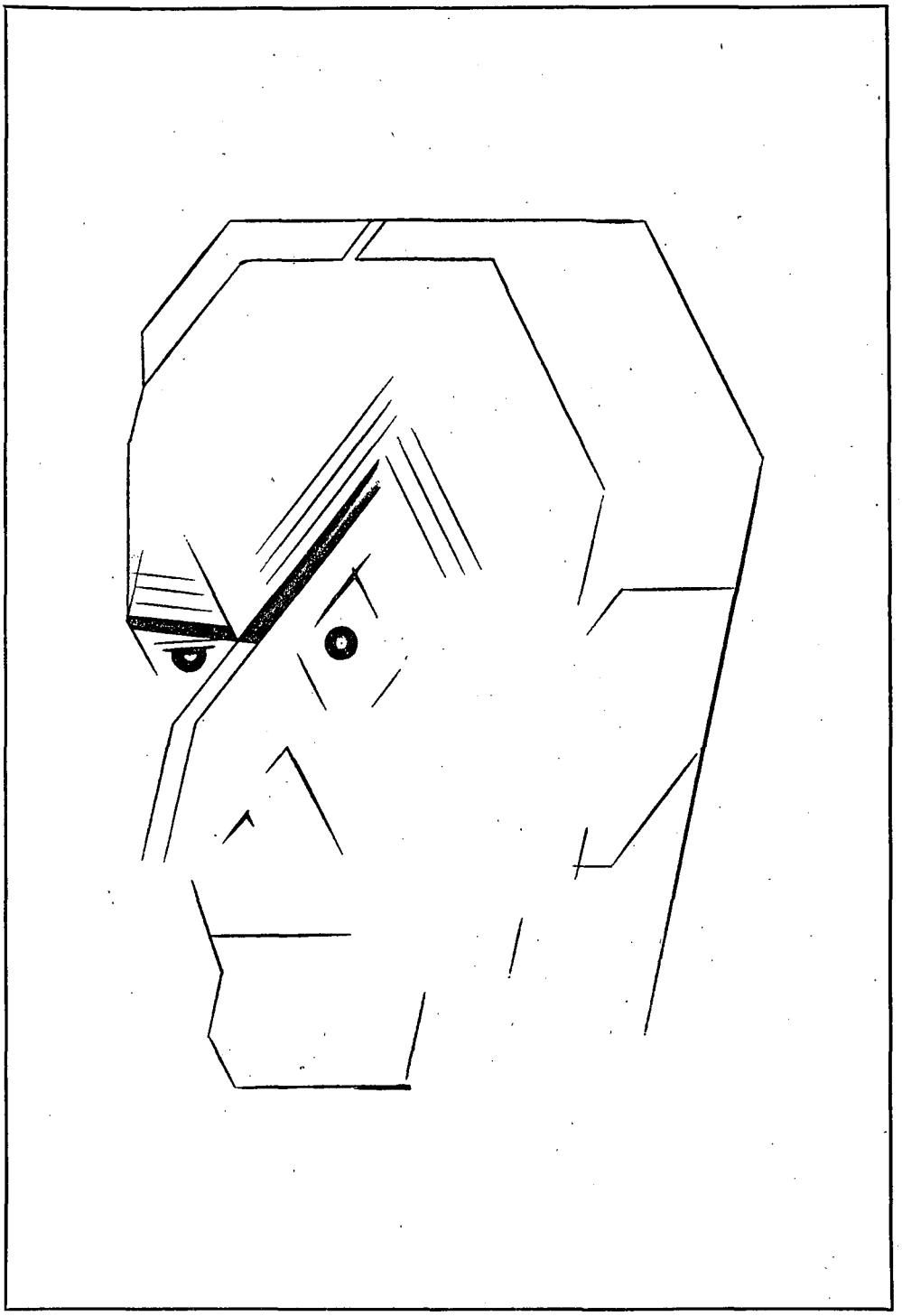

WALTER DE LA MARE

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL 1830-1914

by Barbara Barclay Carter

THERE always has been something magical about Provence. The skein of its history stretches back so far that Mistral could say with truth,

We are the heirs of immortal Greece,
We are thy children, Orpheus, god-like man,
For we are thy sons, O courtly Provence,
And our capital
Is Marseilles who watches the dolphins leap in the sea.

Even the sculpture of the Middle Ages, indeed, reveals at times a strangely Hellenic inspiration. Rome left a more tangible legacy; amphitheatres and triumphal arches and great aqueducts like the famous Pont du Gard. Feudal days scattered the hills with castles, where lovesick troubadours sang for ladies with flower-like names. Arles, with its famous cemetery, holiest of all burial places, was once capital of a kingdom. Golden Avignon, where Petrarch sighed for Laura, seems still exultant with the splendor of papal days. One day, say the Provençaux, the Pope will return to Avignon, and then the millennium will begin, for in the traditions of the people dim memories of history are interwoven with the gold of legend—a people at once exuberant and grave, gay and melancholy, sceptical and believing, who in the last century found their supreme singer.

Frédéric Mistral was born at Maillane, a little village in a rich plain, looking southward to the blue crests of the Alpilles, sheltered on the north by long dark rows of cypresses from the onrush of the great wind of which the poet so appropriately bore the name. His father, Maître François, a yeoman farmer, who had fought in the wars of the Revolution and who owned broad acres of cornland and pasture, olive and vine, was fifty-five and a widower when among the gleaners in his field he saw a beautiful girl, hanging timidly behind the rest.—

"*Mignonne*, what is your name?"

"I am the daughter of Etienne Poulinet, the Mayor of Maillane," she told him. "My name is Delaïde."

"What? The Mayor's daughter a gleaner?"

"Master, we are a large family, six girls and two boys. And our father, though he has enough to go on with, when we ask him for new clothes, tells us, 'My children, if you want finery, you must earn it.'"

Six months after this meeting, which, as the poet their son points out in his *Souvenirs*, recalls the ancient scene of Ruth and Boaz, Maître François had asked Delaïde's hand in marriage.

It was in this atmosphere of antique simplicity that Mistral passed his childhood, having for companions the laborers, the harvesters, the shepherds; a life that was itself poetry, with its rhythmic procession of ploughing and sowing, shearing and haymaking, harvest and vintage and olive-gathering. At Christmas he would go with his father to fetch the Yule Log, which was carried in with traditional ceremony and

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song. At Epiphany he ran with the other children at dusk along the road of Arles, till "the bell-tower of Maillane vanished behind the tall black spear-points of the cypresses, the country stretched vast and bare into the distance", and the sunset flamed purple and gold like a crown. Then "The Kings!" the children cried. "See their crowns, see their mantles, and banners, and the horsemen and camels following!" His mother would regale him with songs and tales of how the Three Maries with Martha and Lazarus and Sara, the gypsies' patron, came in a mysterious ship to Marseilles, of fairy-guarded treasure beneath the Roman ruins, of the ghosts and pixies that sported in the deserted castle, once the proud seat of the Counts of Baux who claimed descent from the Magi. "Not only with the milk of her breast did she feed me," he would write thereafter in his *Souvenirs*, "but with the honey of traditions and of God." In the same book he speaks of his father, "the last of the patriarchs of Provence, custodian of tradition and custom", who kept open table for all comers, and in the winter evenings would read the Gospels to his household, gathered round the great hearth. He was over eighty when he died.

"My friends," he said, "I am going now, and I thank God for all I owe to Him, my long life and my labour, which has been blessed."

Then he asked me, Frédéric, what is the weather?"

"It is raining, father."

"Good weather for the seed."

Just such a death as his son had by then already described in his poem, "The Death of the Reaper":

My kinsmen, friends, my star would have it so,
Or maybe that the Master, the one above us all,
Seeing the corn was ripe, would harvest it.
Ah then! In God's hands be it! I go my way quietly,
Then when you carry the corn, children, upon the cart,
Carry your chief away upon the sheaves. . . .

Maître François had read but two books besides the Gospels: *Don Quixote* and *The Imitation of Christ*, but in his wisdom he willed that his son should become an educated man. Providence must have directed his choice of schools, the little school of Frigoulet, where the children ran wild over the thyme-covered hills, and where the good master cared so little for pecuniary reward that at last he was forced to tell them "I have nothing more for you to eat. You must go home"—the school at Avignon, where the bourgeois boys jeered at Mistral's Provençal speech, but where he made the friendship of Roumanille, the young professor who had himself published Provençal verse, and whose example and encouragement caused him to cry, "Here is the dawn my soul awaited". When at last, Licentiate in Law, he returned from the University of Aix, and his father told him, "I have done my part. It is for you to choose the way that suits you. I leave you free", that way lay clear before him.

"I was then twenty-one. My foot on the threshold of the paternal farm, my eyes turned to the Alpilles, to myself and of myself I formed the resolve: firstly, to renew, to revive the racial sentiment in Provence, disappearing before the false and anti-natural education of all the schools; secondly, to promote that resurrection by restoring the natural and historic language of the country, against which the schools wage a war to the death; thirdly, to bring back the vogue of Provençal by the influx and flame of divine poetry." Meanwhile, under his father's guidance, he took over the direction of the farm.

Not in France alone, but all over Europe, as the progress of democracy and the widening circle of education brought the people into the orbit of national and literary life, two tides were meeting: on the one hand increasing uniformity and centralization, with the advance of the dominant language into regions that had hitherto held fast to a speech and custom of their own; on the other, the development of nationalist and

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regionalist movements seeking to preserve the traditional variant as a precious heritage, symbol of a fruitful diversity. "A language," Mistral would declare in the full maturity of his thought, "is an immense monument to which every family has carted its stone, where every city has built its pedestal, whereat a whole race has labored with body and soul through hundreds and thousands of years. A language in a word is . . . the most holy instrument of civilization and the speaking testament of society living or dead." In Norway and Flanders, in Wales and Ireland and Brittany, in Catalonia, and the southern provinces of France, the same battle was waging; languages that had long forgotten their ancient title of nobility were being born anew. Everywhere this was the poets' doing.

"It was written in Heaven," says Mistral, "that one flowery Sunday, May 21st, 1854, in full springtime of life and of the year, seven poets arranged to meet at the castle of Font Ségugné." These seven, chief among them Mistral, Roumanille, and Aubanel, founded then the famous *Félibrige*, of which the name comes from an old poem in which the Virgin Mary in the Temple was greeted by "the seven *félibres* of the Law"—though what exactly "*félibre*" signified no one knows. A gay fraternity dedicated to the "Gay Science" of the Troubadours, and to the revival of the spirit of old Provence, their special object was the labor necessary to transform a spoken dialect, differing from parish to parish, into a literary language, purged of corrupt forms, uniform in spelling, and adequate in vocabulary—to effect in short for Provençal what Dante effected for the formless Italian of his day. To propagate their ideas they started then the publication of their *Provençal Almanach*, in which several of Alphonse Daudet's most famous *Lettres de mon Moulin* would make their first appearance—a true farmers' almanac, in which tale and poem alternated with recommendations agricultural, domestic, astrological (the *Félibres* had a weakness for astrology; for all Provence the Provençal Nostradamus was a revered authority, and but for the opposition of both mayor and curé Mistral would most appropriately have received his name). To gain the material which made of the *Almanach* a mine of Provençal lore and custom, they would journey continually over the length and breadth of Provence, gleaning all-but-forgotten terms from shepherds and fishermen, witch-wives and herbalists, joining in the popular pilgrimages, stirring up the people to old songs, old tales, sleeping on occasion in barns, more than once arrested as vagrants, everywhere gathering up fragments of vanishing tradition and the older uncorrupted speech. After twenty years Mistral would garner the results of their labors in his *Trésor*, a great dictionary, etymological, technical, biographical, proverbial, historical —an encyclopedia of the whole South, of which Gaston Paris would write that "it is one of the most magnificent gifts the love of a language and of a country has ever made to science".

Meanwhile Mistral had been working on his Provençal epic, *Mireille*, which was finally printed on Aubanel's press at Avignon in 1859. The stars were propitious. The passing of the great Romantics, the collapse of their utopian dreams with the downfall of the Second Republic, had been followed by a period of disillusionment in which Mistral's voice seemed a voice from the Golden Age. The lingering influence of Rousseau still bore fruit in a vogue for worker poets, peasant poets, an Arcadian aspiration towards the sanity of the soil. Lamartine, old now, writing for a living, had himself dreamed of a peasant epic, and it was he who now announced with generous joy, "A great epic poet is born". At the same time a revival of classicism had begun, which could not but favor a poet who had found his vocation when as a boy he "recognized in Virgil and Homer living pictures of the labors, ideas, and customs of the Maillane country".

It is these living pictures that make the

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greatness of *Mireille*. The story is a simple one. Mireille, in the freshness of her fifteen years, loves Vincent, a penniless boy who mends the baskets on her father's farm; before her father's anger she flees in anguish, over the blazing wilderness of the Crau to implore the intercession of the Three Maries in their salt-marsh sanctuary, and dies there of sunstroke and exhaustion, before her eyes a vision of the Saints coming to fetch her in their mysterious ship, though the weeping company who have pursued her see only "the white line joining the sky to the bitter waters, the sun about to sink in the reddening sea". The whole spirit of the land is there, and the labors of the land, the gathering of the mulberry leaves for the silk worms, when the trees are full of laughing, singing girls, swarming "like the yellow bees that rob the honey from the rosemary of the stony plains", the return of the great flocks from their Alpine pasturage; the hush of the starry night when the shepherds are already milking the ewes, their white dogs beside them asleep upon the thyme—Mireille flees past them like a spirit; the reapers advancing in a line of battle on the tawny wheat, the varied company of the haymakers, the ploughmen plodding behind their sleek mules, all are there, described in swift, vivid stanzas of richly woven rhythms and chiming rhymes:

The plain of Crau lay mute and still,
Into the distance stretching till
It lost itself in sea, the sea in the blue air.
And swans, and lustrous water-game,
Flamingoes with their wings of flame,
Over the stagnant waters came,
Seeking the lingering gleams of daylight there.

No translation can render the magic of the original, with its delicate diminutives and sonorous diphthongs, and that close, evocative union between word and object that is found only in languages not yet full-blown and still bound up with what Thomas Macdonagh in his *Literature in Ireland* calls the common furniture of life. (A quality that places it outside schools, and finds a resonance in the modern striving to attain things in their essences.)

Turned into opera by Gounod, translated into every language, the success of *Mireille* was immense and immediate. Seven years later came *Calendal*, a tapestry of scene and legend and history, revealing yet other aspects of the face of Provence, the wild solitudes of the mountains, the precipices where the wild bees nest, the vivacious life of the little towns, the labors and pageantry of the men of the sea. More fantastic, inspired more directly by the troubadours, it tells of how Calendal, a fisher lad, by Herculean feats won the love of the fairy lady Esterelle, setting her free from the bandit Count who had wedded her by force and guile—in part an allegory, for Esterelle is Provence herself, and Calendal, the young *félibrige*, her deliverer. Partly in consequence it had no great success North of the Loire; many mistook Mistral's passionate regionalism for a desire for separation and resented his proud reminder that "only in 1448" Provence annexed itself to France, "not as an accessory to an accessory, but as a principal to a principal"; his indignant outbursts against the French who by the Albigensian Crusade had quenched the fine civilization of the troubadour Courts ("O Flowers, you came too soon! Nation in flower, the sword cut short your blossoming. . . ."), and his threats to defend his "golden speech" with red bullets (much as Dante declared that those who objected to the literary use of Italian should be answered not with reasons, but with a knife!).

For a moment—we are in 1867—Mistral seems to have dreamed of a political coup, in coöperation with his friend the Catalian autonomist Victor Balaguer. For a moment only. But on the plane of ideas the federal resurrection of his province was the "Cause" to which he dedicated his whole life. The France against which he rebelled was a France before the symbol of materialism and irreligion, that France for whom he pleaded

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in 1870 in his magnificent "Penitential Psalm":

Lord, at last Thine anger sends its thunders on our heads, and in the night our galleon strikes its prow upon the rocks. . . .

Lord we had left the austerity of the old laws and ways.

Lord, leaving behind us Thy Sacraments and commandments, brutally we sought to believe only in interest and progress. . . .

Lord, we have blown upon Thy Bible with the wind of false knowledge, and raising ourselves up like the poplars, miserable wretches, we have declared ourselves gods. . . .

In the name of the brave men fallen . . . of the mothers . . . of the women who wet their sheets with tears . . . of the poor, of the strong, of the dead who died for country, for duty, and for faith,

Disarm Thy justice.

A deep social and political vision inspires his whole action. If he would teach his people their past, it is because "the trees the deepest-rooted rise most tall". In place of the dead uniformity of the centralized State he would have the organic unity of harmonized diversity. He saw how "unitarism leads to despotism", the single head being a perpetual invitation to the tyrant. He saw the danger of a proletariat without roots and, fighting to make the provinces living entities, he was fighting for that reinforcement of local ties which alone could prevent the depopulation of the countryside, the attraction of the great urban centres, fighting always in defence of simpler and saner tradition. "If we would restore our poor fatherland," he declared in 1875, "let us restore what produces patriots: religion, tradition, national memory, the ancient speech; city by city, province by province, let us compete in zeal, labor, and honor, to honor diversely the name of France."

Ten years later the same organic, dynamic principle, in its wider implications, led him to an almost prophetic view of the international community to come. "It is my conviction that the *Félibrige* bears in itself the solution of the great political and social questions agitating humanity—the federation of peoples, a Latin confederation, the renascence of the provinces in free and natural fraternity." Adding, no less aptly, that "before devoting ourselves openly to this supreme task, we must await the outbreak of the formidable war . . . between Germanism and Latinity".

Meanwhile he had published his collected poems in *Lis Isclos d'Or* (*The Golden Isles*), in which pieces of grave beauty and vigorous *sirventes* alternate with chanting ballads that have the authentic note of those mellowed by the centuries. Then in 1884 came *Nerto*, a gay legend of papal Avignon in Ariosto's vein; like *Mireille*, it was crowned by the Académie Française. Then *La Reine Jeanne*, a lyrical drama of Queen Joan of Provence. Then, in 1897, a last great masterpiece, *The Poem of the Rhône*.

"O tems di viei, tems gai, tems di simplesso. . . ." It is of the vanished Rhône of his childhood he would write, swarming with life and traffic, when the men of Condrieu passed proudly in their fleets of barges. In the steadily-flowing unrhymed verse the whole journey grows visible—the start from Lyons in the white morning mist, which gradually lifts, revealing the steaming valley and green hills; the town of Vienne, with the gray-blue teeth of Mont Pilatus against the sky; the naked boys leaping beside the wharf of Condrieu, where women have assembled to greet their husbands as they pass; the changing light, the deepening sun, the water still blue with the turquoises gathered in Geneva's lake, on which the white tented barges seem a flight of swans. Down they go, taking on passengers at Valence—a company of Venetian ladies—loading twenty sacks of violets at Ancône, on under the Pont Saint-Esprit, the gate of the South, to where olives and pomegranates grow in the widening valley and the air is hot and sweet with myrtle and lavender, past Avignon with its clustering towers, and on to the clamorous Beau-

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caire fair, their goal. Then back again, with forty horses tugging against the stream. Interwoven is a fairy tale of a young prince seeking the mystic Rhône flower, and l'Anglore, the little fisher girl, who sees in him the Drac, the spirit of the river, who has filled her dreams. After the final disaster they are seen no more, for a steamboat, the first steamboat on the river, crashes into the fleet. And the boatmen trudge away, saying only, "He is dead of us all, today, the mighty Rhône."

Today all that is dead, silent, and vast . . .
Of all that busy life, all that remains
Is the worn tracing and the furrowed line
The fretting cable cut upon the stone.

There is a vein of stoical melancholy in *The Poem of the Rhône* which shows itself—though tempered with moods as gay and exuberant as any of his youth—in Mistral's last poems, *Les Olivades*, published in 1912 in his eighty-second year:

I, before the rising deluge,
Anti-Christian, mad, world-wide,
I have cabined my faith, which stands unconquerable,
To save it from the scourge, the shame,
Up in the watch-tower of a Provençal castle.
My faith is but a dream, that I know well,
But the dream has seemed to me of beaten gold. . . .
It seemed to me a rock, whence I, her lover bore,
Away in my two arms, the Sleeping Beauty. . . .

In the clear-sightedness of age, Platonic-wise, outward events seem to him of less account than vision and ideal, "the life of the living . . . beside the myth, is but reflected light", even his "Cause" the vesture of an archetypal reality:

Enough. For me upon the sea of story,
You were for me, O Provence, a pure symbol,
A mirage of victory and of glory,
Which in the shadow of the centuries transitory,
Revealed us a lightning glimpse of the Beautiful.

With serene expectation, the expectation of the farmer used to watching the weather, knowing the permanence underlying change, he looked to the future—"If not today, why then tomorrow"—with the triumphant assertion, "The Builders are dead, but the temple is builded".

The fame of the *Félibrige* had spread over the world, and now a new generation of ardent youth clustered round him. Awarded half the Nobel Prize in 1905, he used it to form his Arlesian Museum, to keep before the eyes of the people the smallest details of their tradition—costume, crockery, furniture, history. In 1875 he had founded the Floral Games—the counterpart of the Welsh Eisteddfod—at first for Provence and Catalonia only (always there was close fellowship between *Félibres* and Catalans, both memorous of how they shared a common past, when the Count of Barcelona had sailed up the Rhône to wed Doucinella of Arles); then extended to all the South; then to all the Latin world, "The Empire of the Sun" (in 1885 the prize poem was written by a Rumanian). Each time they were celebrated with increasing splendor. In 1909, when Mistral's monument was unveiled at Arles, twenty thousand people assembled, crying in delirious hyperbole "Mistral! You are our King! You are our God!" In 1913 M. Poincaré, as President of the Republic, opened the Floral Games at Aix; in his presence Mistral appealed anew, surely with reason, for "that regionalism in which France will renew her youth".

A year later, he was dead. On his tomb in Maillane there is no name, only the seven-pointed star of the *Félibres*, and the epitaph that sums up his life: *Non nobis Domine, sed nomine tuo et Provinciæ nostræ sit gloria.*

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THE CONTEMPORARY GHOST

by Edith Ronald Mirrielees

Readers who contrast the short stories published in any set of English or American magazines during the early decades of the twentieth century with those published in the nineteenth century can hardly fail to observe in them one striking phenomenon. That is the phenomenon of the story's increased and changed use of the supernatural.

In the nineteenth century, of course, as in every century preceding it, the supernatural held an important place, but in dealing with it nineteenth-century writers had, in general, two habits sharply at variance with present ones. One of these was the habit of substituting the semblance of ghostliness for the actuality; the other the exaltation of man at the expense of ghost. As most present-day readers were brought up on nineteenth-century stories—Hawthorne's, for example, and Poe's—and have made the change to Machen and Blackwood and the rest without conscious analysis, it is worth while to look a little at each of these habits, partly for its own sake but still more for the curious implications involved in its abandonment.

Both Hawthorne and Poe (using the two as representatives of their age) write stories packed with supernatural feeling. With both, supernatural happening is of the rarest. Choosing almost at random among the better known of Poe's stories—"The Fall of the House of Usher" or "Berenice" or "Premature Burial"—the reader finds any one of the three clammy with ghostly sensation, and yet, in all three together, no incident but refers itself straight back to so-called natural causes. Drugs, insanity, delirium, nightmare—these are the demoniac powers that drive the characters. And each of these is a power conceived in man's act and brought to birth in his own brain.

In Hawthorne's stories the driving forces are, indeed, different from those used by Poe, but the reluctance to infringe upon extramundane territory is the same. Time after time Hawthorne lays his hand upon the curtain which hides an unseen world—and snatches the hand hastily away again, protesting that the curtain has not parted. In "The Minister's Black Veil" a dead girl stirs and shivers beneath the hero's gaze—but only a discredited witness is permitted to record the happening. Esther Dudley's childish guests see stately figures moving in the halls of the empty manor house—but none but children see the figures and they report the marvel doubtfully. Other examples might be quoted in numbers from either source. With a zeal worthy of the first great era of the natural sciences, these two, creators, each in his own fashion, of the "new shudder" for their generation, are intent on assigning to that shudder a natural origin.

Now and then, however, the undeniable supernatural does slip inside their pages. When it does, with either of them, it comes always in one established relationship. It

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comes, that is, as the subordinate of man. Its appearance is dependent upon man's performance. William Wilson, quailing before his spectre double, has yet drawn that double to him by his own act. The Grey Champion, when he leaves his grave, leaves it in answer to the challenge of British tyranny. Human crime or suffering—human will, at least—is always needed, whether to rouse the lethargic dead or to center for a moment the attention of unearthly powers. Except when so roused, unearthly powers are powers withdrawn, uninterfering, and very far away.

In the contemporary story, on the other hand, unearthly powers are closely within reach. No magic preparation, no incantation is needed to procure their presence. The supernatural, the unexplainable, bumps against the natural at every turn. In the nineteenth century Faust summoned his devil; in the twentieth his devil quite as often summons Faust.

The difference here is deep-reaching. It indicates an attitude of mind on the part of both writer and reader almost incredibly altered from that of the century just gone. The nature of the alteration may perhaps best be emphasized by reference to two stories of similar theme appearing a scant generation apart.

In 1859 FitzJames O'Brien, standing at the latter edge of the Poe-Hawthorne epoch, published a story, "What Was It?", wherein an invisible opponent, a being with weight and bulk and muscular activity, sensible to touch but not to sight, drops suddenly from nowhere on the hero and strives to kill him. In 1891, Ambrose Bierce, as always well in the forefront of his time, produced the history of another invisible attacker—animal this time—"That Damned Thing". The two are in essence the same—two of the best horror stories in the language. Bierce's stands stark. The beast comes from nowhere, comes for no known reason, comes again and again at will, leaves finally its unoffending prey dead and mutilated behind it. O'Brien in the fifties cannot have it so. In the somewhat bungling introduction to a remarkable story, he provides first a crime and a suicide to cast their baleful influence over the place where the attack occurs; second, a dabbling in things psychic on the part of the hero to give a reason for his being the monster's special victim.

In the century just past, that is, the hero had himself to open the door to his assailant. Now the hero no longer has to open the door; he cannot even hold it shut.

"That Damned Thing" is forerunner of a host of stories wherein initiative for mysterious adventure lies neither with the hero nor with his friends or enemies or any human agent. In "Confession," by Algernon Blackwood, for example, a convalescent soldier, lost in London fog, meets a wistful lady who leads him home to the house where she lies stabbed to death above-stairs. Has the man thus brought known the woman or known her killer or had, in thought or in fact, any parallel adventure? No, to all three questions. He has not even stumbled on the place by chance to give the long established "place-ghost" its opportunity. Nor does the action of the apparition bring down vengeance on anybody or explain anything or affect the ultimate fate of any of the characters. The unhappy soldier comes—and goes again, awed and shaken, as bewildered and purposeless as the shade itself. In Perceval Gibbon's story, "The Dark Ride", the Countess of Marydean strolling home through pleasant English twilight is suddenly lifted out of her own prosperous life and set down in another sordid and dangerous one—and a little later is as inexplicably lifted back into her own. Conrad, in one of the passages of "Heart of Darkness", makes the teller of the story say of his recurrent fevers, "I had often a little fever then, the playful pawstrokes of the wilderness". So with this present phase of the supernatural. A playful pawstroke—and the chance recipient goes on, shuddering. The Thing is there.

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This sense of the crouching Thing, invisible but present on the edge of life, is perhaps the strongest feeling developed by stories like those just quoted. Some idle movement, some restless yawning of the great jaws, betrays the presence to a watcher not even dignified by having been chosen for the exhibition, only chancing to pass by when the movement was being made. Why should one respectable, entirely disconnected pedestrian rather than another—as in "Accessory Before the Fact"—be made by supernatural action the unwilling participant in crime? Well, on the other hand—why not? Why should lightning destroy A's house and not B's? The present ghostly appearance in fiction has in it something of the waywardness of a natural force—has more than the waywardness of a natural force; there are no lightning-rods against the supernal stroke.

This absence of the lightning-rod it is which furnishes, on the whole, the most surprising aspect of a general change. In nineteenth-century fiction, as written either in England or in America, it was not initiative only which belonged to man. Because of his possession of initiative, moral responsibility also was uniformly his. And because of moral responsibility, righteousness, if he had it, was his shield and buckler. Till 1880 or thereabouts the pure in heart, with whatever alarms, were finally safe from ghostly molestation. Since 1880 they are safe no longer.

For this failure of the controlling power of human goodness, two stories a generation apart again provide an illustration: "Circumstance", by Harriet Prescott Spofford, and Kipling's "At the End of the Passage". In "Circumstance", the heroine is bent upon an errand of mercy and is herself of noble character. The ghostly shroud which weaves across her path, though it may startle the reader of the sixties, need not therefore seriously concern him. Her goodness is as effective as a guard of angels. On the other hand, Hummil, in "At the End of the Passage", is quite as much bent on mercy when the powers of darkness make their mysterious attempt upon him. It is his performance of an act of moral heroism which keeps him within reach of the assault—and yet the assault is successful.

Hummil would have been impossible in the time of Harriet Prescott Spofford. At that period he must of necessity have contributed in some fashion to his own doom. Even in the eighties he was still a sole experiment in Kipling's repertoire. "The Phantom 'Rickshaw", "The Return of Imray", "The Courting of Dinah Shadd", come all from the more familiar mould.

Once we top the rise into the twentieth century, however, companions for Hummil appear in numbers. This does not mean, of course, that there do not exist plenty of present-day stories which allow for virtue as a protection from supernatural attack or for guilt as a cause of harm. Stories will probably always exist wherein, as in "William Wilson", human act and ghostly penalty bear an immediate connection. Stories will always exist where innocence wards off destruction. What the new appearance does mean is that this connection, once inevitable, a necessity springing from fundamental conceptions of both reader and writer, is inevitable no longer. The number increases yearly of stories where action is carried out from first to last without regard to the kind of moral nature possessed by the human being caught up, through chance or purpose, into the midst of supernatural movement. Yearly also the Other Kingdom shown in those stories impinges more closely on our own external one. With Hawthorne, it was pulsing in man's brain; today it is jostling his elbows.

Something, that is, has happened to human imagination, as something happened to it at the opening of the Renaissance, when free will entered into fiction. For four hundred years, from mariner's compass to airplane, free will has enlarged its dominion—and now its dominion is threatened. The nineteenth-century mortal, so far as nineteenth-

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century fiction shows, entertained now and then a ghostly visitant in his own world, himself host and summoner of that visitant. The twentieth-century mortal camps at sufferance on the stoop of a world crowded with extra-mortal beings he cannot banish if he would. The reader who explores among the supernatural stories of these latest decades must again and again look to the ghost, not to the man, for the definite cause of action.

That such exploring was at first doubtful and tentative is evidenced by the reception accorded the earlier stories wherein supernatural phenomena escaped their accustomed rôles. The long familiar "remorse ghost" of Kipling's "The Phantom 'Rickshaw" was much more valued by his immediate contemporaries than were the lovely, wilful phantoms caught in the pages of "They". Henry James, in the most tremendous ghost story in the language, so puzzled critics by the freedom allowed his disembodied criminals that several took refuge in denying that there were ghosts in the story at all.

As story followed story, however, understanding advanced. Readers' imaginations pawed themselves free, like Milton's lion out of the earth. At present seemingly no imaginative difficulty is found in stories placing initiative and therefore moral responsibility with the ghost; no difficulty is found in stories allowing for a close-pressing spectral universe, either immediately imposed upon our own or penetrating it as ether was once supposed to penetrate air.

Celtic eyes have frequently seen our world in something this double fashion. To the eyes of English-speaking peoples the sight is new, for English fiction has consistently emphasized the moral. And for moral evaluation man must hold the supreme place; it cannot be ceded. Once admit of bodiless beings moving about him on concerns of their own, affecting him more than they are affected by him, and the question of the rightness or wrongness of his conduct suffers inevitably a diminished importance.

What the effect will be of this diminished importance, whether the long habit of moral evaluation will presently reassert itself, or, if it does not, how far altered habit of mind must display itself in altered action, above all why such alteration appears at this particular point in time—these are enticing questions, but questions to which the final answers must come not from onlookers but from backward-lookers.

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JOHN RUSKIN: DUST AND STAR

by John Macy

When Ruskin was fifty-five he published *Frondes Agrestes*, brief selections by a friend from the early voluminous *Modern Painters*, with a few mature self-critical notes. This small volume contains the gist of the younger Ruskin and the notes show the change that had come over the older. Before he was thirty he had written that "the man who has no invention is always setting things in order, and putting the world to rights, and mending, and beautifying, and pluming himself on his doings as supreme in all ways". In his foot-note he says: "I am now a comic illustration of this sentence, myself. I have not a ray of invention in all my brains; but am intensely rational and orderly, and have begun to set the world to rights". For all his arrogance of opinion Ruskin was usually modest in scrutinizing himself. Another note is not so much an avowal as a betrayal of a limitation. He had placed Scott above all other literary men of Europe, "in an age which has produced Balzac and Goethe". The middle-aged commentator adds: "I knew nothing of Goethe when I put him with Balzac; but the intolerable dulness which encumbers the depth of *Wilhelm Meister*, and the cruel reserve which conceals from all but the intensest readers the meaning of *Faust*, have made him . . . an evil influence in European literature; and Evil is always second-rate". Who but Ruskin, or perhaps Tolstoy, could have thought of Goethe as an evil influence?

The trouble lies in the devoutly capitalized word, Evil. From his brilliant youth to the end of his active career, Ruskin was obsessed and impeded, as well as inspired, by moralistic motives, by the corrupting indignation of the reformer forever seeking irrelevant virtues and finding impertinent vices. This ethical zeal carries him by straight logic of character through the crisis which, when he was forty, seems to divide his work into two parts but really does not break it sharply. Significantly, the two most influential preachers in Victorian literature, Carlyle and Ruskin, were Scots, Calvinistic Covenanters, with much more than "something of the Shorter-Catechist". Whatever their intellectual development or change of belief, they never outgrew the traditions of their childhood, their blood and breeding, and they were hindered as well as strengthened by those traditions, though both in some measure worked free from them. Ruskin was born in London, but that accident of place no more made him an Englishman than Swift's nativity in Dublin made him an Irishman; the Ruskin family in all traceable lines was thoroughly Scottish. Without pushing too far conjectures as to heredity, one may see in the contradictions of Ruskin's character and breeding an evenly divided derivation from his parents. His father was a prosperous wine merchant, a liberal man with a genuine interest in books and art, a traveller with more than business interests, a man of the world. The mother

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was a narrow Calvinist and evidently a domineering woman. When Ruskin went to Oxford, she took residence in the university town so that she might look after her boy's health. Such maternal devotion may be admirable, but it is a wonder he did not grow into a prig and a mamma's darling.

Ruskin's lack of robustness, the two years of partial invalidism which interrupted his studies at Oxford, and the later attacks of brain fever may be in some way related to the fact that his parents were first cousins. He was an only child, born when his mother was thirty-eight. It may also be that he had a mild form of what it is now fashionable to call the Œdipus complex. And there is sufficient evidence that he suffered from another weakness. However that may be, it is certain that from adolescence to middle age this charming, affectionate, not uncomely man cut a sorry figure as a lover. At seventeen he was in love with Adèle Domecq, the fifteen-year-old daughter of the elder Ruskin's partner. The affair was so apparent that the two fathers seriously considered a marriage. Ruskin wrote the girl poems, romances, dramas, and wooed her with the mute diffidence which overcomes even an eloquent youth in love. She married another man. The account which he gives in *Praeterita* of this puppy love, if that is not too light a word for the deep misery of youth, is mildly pleasant, but it is no moving record of a remembered passion. Yet Frederic Harrison says that the affair with Adèle "deeply colored his whole life, and led to the dangerous illness which for some two years interrupted his studies and made him a wanderer over Europe".

Ruskin's marriage, when he was twenty-nine, turned out unfortunately. After five years of nominal companionship Mrs. Ruskin secured an annulment of the marriage under Scots law, and later married Millais, by whom she had several children.

A third misadventure in love was tragic. When Ruskin was almost fifty he proposed marriage to Rosie La Touche, seventeen years old, whose education he had guided since her early childhood. The parents opposed the match solely on the score of Rosie's youth and with no hostility to the distinguished and prosperous suitor. Rosie put Ruskin on probation until she should attain her majority, and then she delayed her decision until she was twenty-four and he was well past fifty, when she finally rejected him. He never saw her again, but they corresponded. Three years later, when she was dying of some disease of the brain, obscure in itself or obscurely recorded in the biographies, he begged to see her. She was a narrow evangelical Christian and had been alienated by his more liberal religious views. She asked him if he could say that he loved God more than he loved her. He would make no such affirmation, and she refused to see him. She died soon after. The torture to his sensitive, even morbid, spirit was intense and contributed to the unsettlement of his intellectual processes and to their physical manifestation in brain fever. He mourned for her the rest of his life and wrote freely to his friends about his unhappiness. The passages in *Praeterita* relating to Rosie are touchingly innocent and tender. One letter from her Ruskin carried in a gold case. Love-letters are private things, usually a bore to other people, and we cannot regret the destruction of the correspondence between Ruskin and Rosie; but there is something furtive and timidly discreet in the act of the faithful survivors in authority who took the tender treasures out of doors and set fire to them.

E. T. Cooke and Frederic Harrison conclude the story by quoting with approval the words of a French writer, Bardoux, who is not a first-hand authority on any aspect of Ruskin: "*Il faut s'incliner bien bas devant ces deux âmes, assez fortes pour sacrifier, l'une sa vie, l'autre son bonheur, à la sincérité absolue. Le grand Corneille les aurait trouvées dignes de ses héros*". Do Englishmen have to go across the Channel for that sort of feeble support because they are

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ashamed to erect it themselves? There is no evidence that Rosie's fatal illness was in any way due to her love or her lover, or that Ruskin could have saved her by seeing her, or that he sacrificed happiness to sincerity. The reference to *le grand Corneille* is one of those literary gestures which painfully fail to ennoble human sorrow. Ruskin was simply stupid and weak in his obstinacy. A vital lover would cheerfully swear that he loved God better than his sweetheart or loved her better than he loved God, whichever candid mendacity the woman demanded—especially a woman who was ill.

II

These moral reflections would be tediously impertinent if Ruskin were not forever throwing out ethical challenges in his life and writings, and if the sorrow had not seriously affected his work. We cannot tell how seriously. He did not succumb to grief; his heart was hurt but not broken. The physical and mental infirmities which tormented him have an origin earlier than his love for Rosie La Touche; but any attempt at retrospective clinical examination of him is little more than fruitless speculation. Ruskin himself believed that his loss of mental stability was in part due to his love. We are told that after severe attacks of brain fever his mental sky cleared and he was fairly serene and intellectually active. For a time he was interested in spiritualism and vain efforts to communicate with the dead. His shrewd scepticism rescued him from that futility. He made a special shrine in his imagination to St. Ursula and identified her with his lost love; Rosie-Ursula became an idealized figure which he also fancied to be like Dante's Beatrice. Such a romantic creation is the fine flame that survives the fires of passion and the ashes of grief in any lover who is fortunate enough to have an intellect capable of illumination. Rosie lives for us in *Praeterita* and as φίλη of *Sesame and Lilies*, to whom the book is dedicated and without whose help "the day would have come before now, when I should have written and thought no more".

Ruskin's biographers seem to have made too much of his manifest illness and set it up as a defence to shield his defects of character, temper and thought. He was not of athletic mould and he was subject to mental attacks, but after all he lived to be eighty and was active until he was seventy. Unlike his master, Carlyle (or Carlyle's grumbling account of himself), Ruskin was generally eupeptic. He was a prodigious worker, found time for multifarious ramifying interests, and was capable of tireless concentration with pen and pencil. His discursiveness, not due to indolence or inattention, was characteristic of him from his earliest, most vigorous days; and his later complaint that his mind scattered, that in adding a simple column of figures he fell to thinking of seven as the seven deadly sins and of nine as the nine Muses, betrays only an exuberant imagination, which his trained craftsmanship and unwavering command of words brought under control. He was neurotic, but that is only a longer word for nervous, and every finely organized person with alert senses and a delicate, lively imagination is "nervous". Ruskin spent his energy lavishly, became absorbed in what he was doing and often did not notice that he was getting tired. This is a most wholesome and happy state of mind, the best way of using oneself to advantage. He was not excessively hypochondriac and he worried more about God Almighty's universe than he did about himself; life irritated him and depressed him not because it abused him specifically but because it was not right in general. Beyond question his nature was generous, altruistic, not meanly self-centered. Underneath whatever his character may have been in its strength and weakness stood the solid support of wealth, ample means for living a comfortable, well-nourished life. His most exhausting conflicts were within his body and spirit.

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His outward conflicts were with a world which he attacked because he enjoyed attacking, as does any other kind of voluntary fighter, and the world treated him very well. The conflicts and contradictions of his character and circumstances began in his boyhood. On one side he was severely disciplined, restrained, punished. On the other hand he had, in every sense of the word, a liberal education, opportunity to know the best, under the guidance of a generous father. He was instructed in music, drawing and literature, was free from the worst kind of cut-and-dried schooling, and at Oxford he was more deeply and variously educated than some of his contemporaries who passed him in routine studies. He was outwardly respectable and respectful, yet inside he was a rebel and a revolter. He was a pious Calvinist and at the same time an instinctive sceptic, as obedient to the God of his fathers as if he had been the evangelical preacher that his mother wished him to be, yet endlessly inquisitive as to the meaning of texts and bold in his private interpretation of religious precepts. By temperament and circumstance he was an aristocrat and he came within two paces of being a snob; he was an avowed Tory and lover of kings, but of kings, be it noted as he noted, who did something worth while, like the kings of Homer and Scott. He did not like the multitude and he often despaired of its ignorance and vulgarity. Yet he fought its battles all the second part of his life, and even before. In the contest between the masses and the classes, between democracy and the authority of an imposed government, Ruskin was all at odds with himself and with the extreme advocates on both sides. In a note in *Time and Tide* he writes: "The Americans as a nation set their trust in liberty and in equality, of which I detest the one and deny the possibility of the other". Ruskin hated every sort of tyranny, yet for him freedom, liberty—what was that but the liberty of the fly disporting itself on an obedient and disciplined dog? These contradictions, these mutually destructive oppositions lay partly in the inherent confusions of the world he observed and whose insoluble problems he tried to solve. In part the contradictions were born and bred in Ruskin, in his nature and circumstances.

No man in biography is more clearly the child of his childhood. The first book of Ruskin's to read for an understanding of his other books is his last and most beautiful, *Praeterita*, which he left unfinished when his weary but still lucid mind failed at last and the pen fell from his aged hand. In this twilight book which looks back to the dawn, Ruskin is most winning, serene, wistful, simple. His faults have dropped away from him, for he is not trying to prove anything, or attack anything, or to instruct or reform the unheeding world, or even to make magnificent sentences. Among all published retrospects, memoirs, confessions, *Praeterita* holds a distinguished place. Ruskin is a naïvely innocent person; he has no profundities to reveal, no terrible secrets of which he must unbosom his soul. His self-portrait is sketchy and casual, but quite firm; here are no babblings of a crack-voiced ancient, but mellow placid reflections upon what he modestly calls some things that may be worth remembering.

III

This boy, who is so amiably recorded after his long journey is done, sets forth in his early twenties upon his first adventure into the world of intellectual conflict. He is shiningly equipped, with a style that seems truly a gift of the gods, with the confidence of youth, and with surprisingly little of the ignorance common to youth. From the first, whatever his mistakes, he has the air of a man of mature wisdom, and his cocksure righteousness somehow never makes him quite ridiculous; he holds his head high, sustains his grand manner, and manages never to come a bad cropper. He is a true knight,

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but he is always an unhappy warrior at heart. The reason is that he carries, hung round his proud neck or shackling the foot of his winged steed, a burden too great for even undaunted youth to bear or drag—moral responsibility for the entire universe.

From his first dauntless quest he comes home by no means defeated, but amazingly triumphant. Not wholly successful at first, he returns persistently to what he conceives and what really proves to be a great campaign, puts bombs under sloth, indifference, stupidity in matters artistic, imposes on the British public and upon the painter himself such a reputation as not even Turner's genius quite warranted and such as the British public has never submitted to before nor since. For in a large way it did submit to Ruskin, in spite of the opposition of artists and critics of art. Later Ruskin thought that he had failed, if only because the public neglected the Turner gallery which Ruskin arranged after the painter's death. Yet he knew that he had succeeded, for one of his reasons for wishing to discard from republication much of *Modern Painters* was that the ideas advanced there, in behalf of Turner or apropos of him, had been accepted. The voice, at first crying in the wilderness, as Ruskin fancied himself, grew to messianic authority, and nothing was lacking but martyrdom, which Ruskin would have enjoyed, but which was not possible in the nineteenth century when the matter of controversy was only such a trifling affair as artistic rectitude. In time Ruskin developed from John the Baptist to John the Divine, uttering oracles, revelations, and prophecies, sometimes inspired, sometimes cryptic enough, almost always saved from mystical nonsense by unfaltering clarity of expression. He stands as an eminent denial of the dubious notion that a prophet is without honor in his own country.

When he was thirty-five Ruskin had won to a position of authority which is seldom attained in purely intellectual matters by white-bearded patriarchs. His ambition was inordinate; in a man even a shade less famous and secure, it would have been grotesque. He writes to Furnivall in 1854: "I don't say I wouldn't care for reputation if I had it, but until people are ready to receive all I say about art as 'unquestionable', just as they receive what Faraday tells them about chemistry, I don't consider myself to have any reputation at all worth talking about". To argue with Ruskin in this day of the world is like raising again a dust that has long settled, hardened, been overlaid by later dust; it is gratuitous, anachronistic. Yet he is so constantly arguing and asserting, that argument and assertion often seem the only modes of thought with which to handle him. Moreover, we must avoid the worse anachronism of seeing him only from our point of view and our moment in time; we have to get back to his period by leaping three quarters of a century if we are to understand what he had to deal with and what he accomplished. One of his failings was that he saw everything in the past, in the Middle Ages which he adored but did not understand, with nineteenth century eyes, and never considered any point of view but his own.

The first principle of criticism (Ruskin always put things in terms of "principles", and we may follow his lead) is to give yourself up wholly to a work of art and see what it does to you, then to close your eyes and think about it with all the mind you have. It is especially noticeable in the appreciation of music that many listeners go to a concert to get something more or less defined before they go, and are pleased or disappointed as they find or fail to find what they are after, instead of lying back and letting the music happen to them and later, if they are so inclined, pondering on it with such minds as they have, chewing a fresh cud of enjoyment and meditation. Another "principle" of criticism is not to get the instruments of the Bureau of Intellectual Standards in the wrong room. Ruskin's reference to Faraday

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is ridiculous; he should have been the first (for he was capable of such palely humorous remarks) to discover that you cannot measure the temperature of a water-color with a thermometer. Moreover, nothing that Faraday said about chemistry was accepted simply because he said it; other chemists checked his experiments. It is pertinent to remember that his accounts of his researches remain a model for men of science in their groping humility and (in this case a human standard may be carried from one department of thought to another) a model for practitioners and critics of art. It may be that "scientific criticism" is a delusion, or a misnomer, as vain as scientific love-making. But a scientific attitude toward any subject, art, life, or love-making (and its consequences) is a sound attitude and does not preclude or in the least disturb the free play of emotions and impressions.

IV

Ruskin considered himself to be scientific, accurate, rational, an exponent of the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He was, indeed, a loose reasoner, an inept arguer. As an advocate he prevails only by his eloquence, which remains irresistible at its best. He was a tingling mass of emotions, prejudices, beliefs rigid as steel, and fancies like the shadow of a dream, of imagination all compact; he mixes the components of life without ever arriving at a speculative unity and consistency, yet without ever falling, idea for idea, sentence for sentence, into the kind of confusion that is due to muddled phrasing. Extract from him any one of thousands of passages, and you have a jewel, a thing of perfect beauty and radiance which can stand any light and give out its own light. Follow him through a long discourse and you soon wonder whether you are lost or whether he was lost at the start.

The most sacred tenet in the gospel of art according to Ruskin is fidelity to nature. Ruskin lives in the late sunset of the age of Scott and Wordsworth, which really never sets at all but continues after a brief period of cloudiness through the rich poetry of the entire nineteenth century. "Nature I loved, and next to nature art," sang Landor. The two objects of love may be different in a million ways, but the love is the same, and the poet, whether his medium be words, paint or notes, is the supreme lover. The word "nature" and words derivative from it have been so variously used that no discourse based on them, without precise limiting definitions can result in anything but confusion. Ruskin's criticism is often obfuscated by his presumptuous certainty that he knows what is natural and what is not. One is reminded of a line in a French comedy: "Are not all children natural?" And we recall the airy remark of one whom Ruskin detested, Whistler, who, on being complimented for the resemblance of his pictures to nature, replied: "Yes, nature is picking up". Ruskin says, "I never shrink from any conclusions, however contrary to human authority, to which I am led by observance of the principles of nature". This is very fine and honest. But—again one must resist the provocation to argue futilely with Ruskin—what are the principles of nature and what is human authority but the very thing which Ruskin was avowedly striving to establish for himself?

Ruskin's approval of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is based on the assertion that "the first principle of Pre-Raphaelitism" is "that no drawing should be made except from nature itself", that "Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything, down to the most minute detail, from nature, and from nature only". Millais said the same thing, that the Pre-Raphaelites had only one aim, "to present on canvas what they saw in nature". But their principles were vague in theory and practice, and no member of the Brotherhood

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adhered consistently to any one principle or long agreed with his brothers.

Ruskin seems to have tempered his approval with reservations and to have felt that something was wrong in his effort to reduce Pre-Raphaelitism to rules, for in a foot-note he adds that some of the Brotherhood "trust their memory or fancy very far; only all agreeing in the effort to make their memories so accurate as to seem like portraiture, and their fancy so probable as to seem like memory". That admits almost every picture ever painted. The Pre-Raphaelites are as unlikely a group as could be selected for examples of drawing from nature. Just what were the living models of Holman Hunt's "Light of the World", or of Millais's "Return of the Dove to the Ark", or of Rossetti's "Girlhood of Mary, Virgin", or of his many heads, which, whether the alleged subject be a person existent in the flesh or Beata Beatrice, all look like variants of some unearthly Blessed Damozel? Nothing is more ephemeral than an attempt to formulate permanent principles of art and eternal standards of taste, even with the apparent support of timeless words like Truth and Nature. Ruskin's most positive judgments have faded as have many of the works of Pre-Raphaelites.

Ruskin was often unfortunate in his choice of contemporary work to praise or to blame. One who is not expert in the history of painting will have to search, sometimes in vain, in encyclopedias and handbooks of art to find even the names of some whose reputations he tried to make. And he was equally unsuccessful in his opposition to reputations he tried to break. The farcical case of Whistler *versus* Ruskin is memorable chiefly because Ruskin took his legal defeat so seriously that it was one reason why he resigned his professorship at Oxford.

In the seventy-ninth letter of *Fors Clavigera*, addressed to workers who had no conceivable interest in the subject, Ruskin expressed his views of Burne-Jones and Whistler, who held prominent places in an exhibition at Grosvenor Gallery. Ruskin "skied" Burne-Jones in exaggerated prophetic glorification. Burne-Jones's work "is the only art work in England which will be received by the future as a classic of its kind, the best that has been done or could be". "I know", that Burne-Jones's pictures "will be immortal as the best things the nineteenth century could do." "For Mr. Whistler's sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen and heard much of Cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." It is a critic's privilege to damn a painting to his heart's content. The law is not concerned with such opinions. But the law does take heed of attacks on a man's character and on the money value of his property, and of charges of fraud. Whistler sued Ruskin for libel. The case gave Whistler a beautiful opportunity to display his saucy wit. Ruskin welcomed the action. "It is mere nuts and nectar to me", he wrote to a friend, "the notion of having to answer for myself in court—and the whole thing will enable me to assert some principles of art economy which I've never got into the public's head by writing." The court awarded Whistler a farthing in damages. Some people laughed. The Brotherhood of Pre-Raphaelites was divided; Burne-Jones, somewhat embarrassed, on Ruskin's side, and Rossetti, equally uncomfortable, on Whistler's side. Whistler's "Old Battersea Bridge", which Ruskin thought a cheat at two hundred guineas, was later purchased by the National Collection fund for two thousand guineas—which proves nothing about its artistic value.

The revenges of time were often severe on Ruskin, as they are likely to be on dogmatic prophets who happen to guess wrong. He tried to keep his critical opinions free from

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entangling alliances, but was too emotional to keep his mind detached and "disinterested". He wrote to a friend whom he had severely criticized in a wholly professional way that he hoped the censure would make no difference in their friendship. To which the friend replied: "Dear Ruskin—Next time I meet you I shall knock you down, but I hope it will make no difference in our friendship". Ruskin's economics of art is a "pathetic fallacy" more grievous than that to which he gave the name. He hangs so many social and religious sermons on stones that the stoutest Gothic cathedral would crumble under the weight. And it is his sermons not the stones that have crumbled into dust. He is a passionate lover of art, but he is the exacting kind of lover who fusses and worries the life out of his beloved. In his efforts to identify and rectify values in terms which do not apply to them he falsifies history and mistakes one kind of virtue for another, one kind of vice for another. He hates trade and commerce and industry. Wherefore he cannot get five pages into his study of Greek myths without characterizing the authors of them as "the strange people who had other loves than those of wealth, other interests than those of commerce". They had other interests; war, piracy, brigandage, the getting of more slaves, to increase their wealth and leisure to dream. Every splendid civilization is built on wealth and production and commerce. The beauty of Venice was built upon commercial mastery in the hands of as unscrupulous a gang of pirates as ever scuttled a ship.

The *laudator temporis acti*, availing himself of the permission which is granted to all of us, as Thoreau says, to slander our own times, is forever looking back to some golden age which was not all gold, looking back with almost the same shortness of vision which deceives complacent modern man into thinking that progress began a few years ago with the invention of electric lights or radios. "In the Gothic times," says Ruskin, "writing, painting, carving, casting . . . were all works done by thoughtful and happy men; and the illumination of the volume, and the carving and casting of wall and gate, employed, not thousands, but millions, of true and noble *artists* over all Christian lands." That is a pretty picture, but it is not historically accurate.

The joys of the Middle Ages have been underrated ever since Victor Hugo and other romantics emphasized the poverty, misery and tyranny of the times that built Notre Dame, while still other romantics were celebrating and reviving the Gothic and all things medieval, erecting a cult of "mediolatry". The workers were in bondage to master-builders, they were often out of work and starving, building was seasonal and sporadic, and the guilds had to fight for every inch of their rights and privileges somewhat as the trades-unions have to fight today. Ruskin had not the benefit of reading the *History of Trade Unionism* by Sydney and Beatrice Webb, who are now importantly active in the British Government (what would Ruskin have thought of that?). "There is not," he says, "a building that I know of lately raised, wherein it is not sufficiently evident that neither architect nor builder has done his best. It is especially characteristic of modern work. All old work nearly has been hard work. It may be the hard work of children, of barbarians, of rustics; but it is always their best." How do we know that? How do we know that they were not careless and indifferent some of the time? Only the best of the old buildings stand; the rest have fallen. Some fine Gothic towers, beautiful perhaps as designs on paper, have collapsed because they were jerry-built. Ruskin knew something of architecture as a spectacle. But he knew less about construction and the practical uses of building materials than any competent engineer. That would not be to his discredit, if he had not assumed to know. He condescendingly cannot "help allowing Brunelleschi his iron

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chain around the dome of Florence, or the builders of Salisbury their elaborate iron binding of the central tower". Yet he makes the rule that "metals may be used as a *cement* but never as a support". He is speaking, of course, of stone buildings and it is, again, an anachronism to expect him to foresee the tendency of building from the crustacean to the vertebrate. But he himself provokes the anachronism by laying down the law that it is "right to retain as far as may be, even in periods of more advanced science, the materials and principles of earlier ages".

By walking a few yards from this typewriter, which is ugly and morally wrong because it is a machine and not a goose-quill, I can see the towering dignity of the Chrysler Building, the chief fault of which is that it is on too small a plot of ground and springs from too narrow a base. Ruskin would have hated it because it is built of steel and because it is near a railroad station, which is also beautiful and—of all atrociously commercial things!—houses an art gallery. I wonder what Bartolomeo Buon, who built the Campanile di San Marco (the third, which collapsed in 1902), would think of the Chrysler Building. And I wonder whether Leonardo, who was always experimenting with all kinds of materials, would have understood a word (translated into perfect Tuscan) of the talk of this strange man from the north, who loved Italy, studied it intensely, and used it as a text for preachments that were neither Catholic nor pagan. Ruskin hated Italian railroads; everybody does. But he had a special grudge against British railroads, which are very well run and probably, as railroads went in his day, were the best in the world. Ruskin resented their being built at all, and thought the labor had been better spent in building beautiful houses and churches. But when he went from London to Edinburgh to give his lectures on *Architecture and Painting*, he did not walk (as Tolstoy did later) nor order a special stage-coach. In Edinburgh he had not talked for three minutes before he was comparing Edinburgh unfavorably with Verona, which has a broad and rushing river of blue "instead of the valley that you have now filled by lines of railroad". Ruskin was out of tune with his time, as every sensitive and rebellious man must be out of sympathy with the ugliness and misery of much of man and man's works. But he would have been out of key with any time and place, because he was born discontented and irreconcilable.

Ruskin's practical economic experiments, backed by his own money, "St. George's Guild", the attempt to found model industrial and educational communities, failed or came to little. Yet his rebellion remains magnificent, provocative, still entertaining to read about, even inspiring. For in one sense he was what the radical economist J. A. Hobson calls him, "the greatest social teacher of his age". For he wrote more beautifully, more eloquently, more persuasively and more irritatingly than any other man of his century or ours who touched whatever is contained in the chill intellectual word "sociology". He could be all wrong in his facts, lay himself open at every step in his reasoning, be even insolent, patronizing and offensive in his manner, and yet be thoroughly right in his passion, his angelic purpose, his ultimately beautiful vision of life as it should be. His criticism stings and heats and lights, and by its fervor raises him above his own most patent errors, so that he lives among the Hebrew prophets and with the poets of all times. Open him anywhere, and you shall find sentences and series of sentences which are unsurpassed in English prose.

V

In a supreme way Ruskin's appeal to nature is fruitful with imperishable fruit. The most splendid passages in *Modern Painters* are not those which deal with the technique of art or its moral obligations, but the "illustrative" descriptions of sky, mountains,

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streams and seas. For example, the sunrise on the Rigi, in great branching, flowing and plunging rhythms, taking, if ever words can take or give, the form and color of the thing beheld. Verbal description is notoriously weak, and sunrises and sunsets are so defiant of words that attempts to paint them with phrases have become a stock example of ridiculous futility. A few poets, Francis Thompson and Ruskin, have achieved the impossible magnificence of ocular vision transmuted through opulent sequences of sound. The "angel of the sea", the wonders of water, the "muscular power of mountain"—these and many more justify Ruskin's contented note on one of them: "I will venture to say of it, as Albert Dürer said when he was pleased with his work—that for what it has to do, it cannot be much better done". He was proud that he had celebrated the pine tree as it had never been celebrated before. In his accounts of buildings he is best when he treats them as if they were objects in nature to be observed and contemplated, when the pictorial artist triumphs over the technical critic and admonisher of taste. He cannot teach us about the construction of a weed without himself lighting the "lamp of beauty", sometimes running into an almost Swinburnian lyricism. "The loosest weed that drifts and waves under the heaving of the sea, or hangs heavily on the brown and slippery shore, has a marked strength, structure, elasticity, gradation of substance . . . every fork of its ramifications is measured and proportioned; every wave of its languid length is love."

Ruskin's undulating nineteenth-century prose runs back through the straight clear channels of the eighteenth century to the seventeenth, to the King James Bible, and still further back to Hooker, his early master and favorite, whom later, in the preface to *Sesame and Lilies,* he half repudiates. His metaphors reel and jostle, and yet are steady and orbited like the apparent stars. He is in supreme and continuous command of his style. From first to last the voice of Ruskin is unmistakable. But he is often mistaken; even when he is talking about his own style he is mistaken: "Now the intense fault of all my early writing is that you know in a moment it is my writing, it has always the taste of me in it. But that is the weakness of me, or .the insincerity". Nobody else ever thought him insincere, and only a perversely hostile reader can accuse him of affectation; indeed, he is often too dead in earnest to be wholly agreeable. He thought that he was growing more simple as he grew older and he made conscientious efforts to reduce his ideas to elementary plain expression for the benefit of us children whom he was trying to educate. But when he is excited he flies high; he is "naturally" ornate, but he is free from the vice of specious oratory, which his whole honest nature abhorred.

It may be that style is not only what Lowell called it, "Fame's great antiseptic", but the one real abiding substance of writing, the very essence that can hope for immortality. Ideas change and pass; an idea perfectly uttered remains. No writer was ever more truly saved from oblivion by virtue of his style than this puzzling and contradictory Ruskin. His theories of art have proved transitory as vapor, narrowly of an age, of a moment, like the journalism he despised. His economic teachings are dust and ashes, as indeed are most of the works on economics of the nineteenth century. His marvellous prose lifts him above the debris of his shattered creeds and dogmas and places him securely among the stars.

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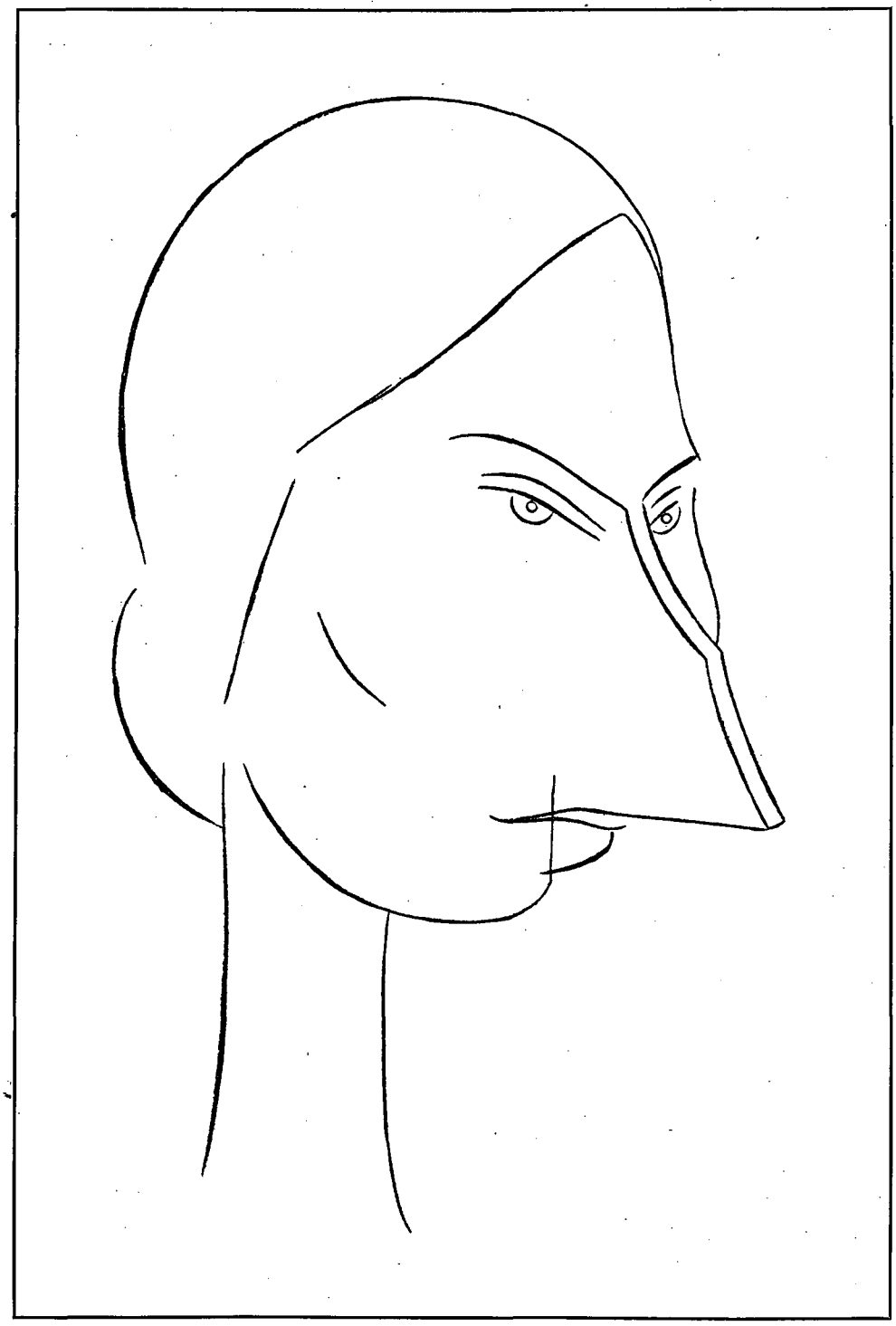

MARGARET KENNEDY

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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THE THEATRE

by Francis Fergusson

Editor's note: THE BOOKMAN *herewith resumes its monthly review of the New York theatre, a popular feature of the magazine for more than thirty years, which was suspended last season to save space for more purely literary material. So many old* BOOKMAN *readers have regretted the absence of a favorite department that we have become convinced, as were our editorial predecessors, that the theatre is one of the fields in which* THE BOOKMAN *should serve as a monthly reporter. We are particularly pleased to find in Mr. Francis Fergusson a young critic whose work has revealed him as a worthy successor of* THE BOOKMAN'S *distinguished line of commentators on the stage. The magazine's first critic was Norman Hapgood, in the nineties and the early years of the century. He was followed by Frank Moore Colby. Later critics have been Clayton Hamilton, Walter Pritchard Eaton, Montrose J. Moses, John Farrar, Louis Bromfield, Larry Barretto, Robert Benchley, and Ernest Boyd. Mr. Fergusson's first paper deals with a group of plays of the early season having some literary association, whether dramatizations of novels or revivals of classics. Next month he will take up revues and comedies.*

THE story of *Bad Girl* is the life-history, in the biological sense, of the flat-dweller. It is concerned with the phenomena of courtship, reproduction, and the struggle for existence. In Scene I we see the anatomy and physiology of the seduction. If this episode were given the slightest twist, just a bit of judicious heightening, it would be a Rabelaisian masterpiece. If the actors relaxed their concentration for a moment it would be unendurably vulgar. As it is, audience and actors alike stare with fascinated single-mindedness at the episode itself, practically without comment, except for an occasional embarrassed titter from a flat-dweller who breaks in the audience.

This gives an indication of the excellence of the acting of Paul Kelly and Sylvia Sidney. Paul Kelly produces a likable young dumbbell with remarkable mastery, and with a humor which comes out best in the scenes which have to do with his approaching fatherhood. (These scenes are the best in the play, being based on a very real misunderstanding which gives the actors a chance to act instead of suffer: each one wants to have a child and thinks the other doesn't want it.) Sylvia Sidney does almost as well as the Eve of the Grand Concourse. Her work is unacceptable only when she abandons her humor in favor of her hysterics, or when the script obliges her to argue about birth control. A loud female debate about obstetrics has no place in a light comedy. It is no fun to hear a young woman sobbing loudly. It adds nothing to the pleasure of the evening to have her scream in childbirth. What if the childbirth is incredible? The screams are undeniable, and hurt the ear. The whole entertainment is much too slight to stand this sort of thing.

The play, in fact, which is a dramatization,

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is nothing in itself. A mere series of discrete episodes. We have to thank the very excellent direction of Marion Gering (except in the serious moments) and the acting for any pleasure we may experience.

A Farewell to Arms

Mr. Stallings faced a difficult problem when he tried to translate Ernest Hemingway's novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, into stage terms. How was he to save the half-hearted and dreary Austro-Italian war; the sense of the passage of time; the helpless love affair: above all the peculiar qualities of Hemingway's sensibility? The war he missed entirely. In the novel the war is at least present in a certain way to the chief character, especially during his flight through the Italian retreat; but on the stage the war is reduced to a few perfunctory properties and off-stage noises. In the novel the feeling of the continuing war, punctuated by the haphazard adventures of "baby", is one with the lapse of months; but on the stage the episodic character of the story interferes with its unity.

The love-story is made the center of interest in the stage version. Thanks to Mr. Mamoulian's direction and the acting of Elissa Landi and Glenn Anders, something authentic is established. Mr. Mamoulian did an excellent job of casting. Glenn Anders *is* the huskily passionate and bewildered child that Hemingway portrays, and Elissa Landi is an Englishwoman with a beautiful voice who renders very justly and neatly a certain kind of sad and pampered infatuation. It seems that she is an artist; but Mr. Anders is convincing here for what he is rather than for what he does. The love-story gains through the concentration necessary to the stage. Scenes that in the novel are fairly widely separated are here put together, and the result is to emphasize the brutality, the desperation and the sentimentality of love between two hopeless exiles. It makes of the story a kind of modern *Tristan und Isolde*, as Mr. Mamoulian apparently felt also. In his effort to make it carry across the footlights he has tended toward the operatic. In the reversed *Liebestod* of the last act, where Catherine instead of "baby" dies, having given birth to a dead child, she is carried on under a scarlet cape; there is the off-stage murmur of passing drums and trumpets, and Mr. Ander's wailings are unintelligible amid the sounds of a more or less Wagnerian finale. All of which is sound staging, and a satisfactory rendering of one aspect of Mr. Hemingway's art; but there is another aria which comes to mind, honest in its way, and in many ways a better equivalent for Hemingway's sensibility than the *Liebestod*:

"I can't give you anything but LOVE,
ba-by.
That's the only thing I've plenty OF,
ba-by . . ."

In fact, it is when one comes to look for the Hemingway sensibility, which gives the novel its importance, that one is most disappointed. Mr. Stallings has tried to save it by keeping the dialogue intact; but the Hemingway laconic remarks lose their flavor when they are not imbedded in the Hemingway prose. It would, as I remarked above, be very difficult to find a stage equivalent for this prose of Hemingway's. The object which it creates is too passive to be dramatic. Only Chekhov so far has succeeded in putting some such mixture of sensuousness and nostalgia on the stage. It is no wonder that Mr. Stallings failed.

There is another aspect of *A Farewell to Arms* which should be mentioned: the fact that it is about an American in Europe. Mr. Mamoulian brought out very well "baby's" incommensurability with the worldly and sceptical Rinaldi; but his relation to the priest was less convincing. This was partly due to the acting, and partly to the fact that this relation is very incompletely realized in the novel. But then, Mr. Hemingway puts down only what he sees; he does not theorize. This is the mark of his honesty.

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Stepdaughters of War

Stepdaughters of War is an English war play about women ambulance drivers. It was dramatized by Kenyon Nicholson from the novel by Helen Zenna Smith. It is more successful than the other dramatizations I have seen, though *A Farewell to Arms* made a play. There is more of a plot: the story of the efforts of an Englishwoman of good family to accept first the war and then the peace: having made an adjustment to air raids and mangled men, she finds nothing in common with those who have never experienced the war. Her solution is to marry a mangled officer whose wound keeps him from life at one of its most important points. All of this is clear and consistent. The war is taken as something indigestible by the human spirit, as malignant and inexplicable. The play is then about the human spirit in contact with this superhuman catastrophe; and the various characters who experience it are pretty well realized as far as the play itself goes. We understand them all the better because they are English, and the English fleshly stoicism, the stiff upper lip and the underlying sentimentality; the English subconscious tribal tenacity of life, has come to mean something pretty concrete for us. *Journey's End* was built on a similar pattern. But what of the war itself? The same factor that makes Kit Evans incomprehensible to her stay-at-home friends, makes a play about the war essentially foreign and meaningless to those who have never been in such a war. For this reason the audience begins to laugh after a certain number of horrors, and for this reason the play is important rather as the testimony of a war casualty than as a specimen of dramatic art. Its evil *deus ex machina* is too special.

Mr. Erskin's direction, loudly featured in all the advertisements, is extremely competent, but it is rather awkwardly committed to as complete a realism as possible. The rain is real water; there is an actual ambulance truck on the stage, which is joggled to indicate passing over bumpy roads. Such a heavy reliance on machinery shows Mr. Erskin as indefatigable, but inclined to spend his ingenuity in the wrong direction.

Mr. Gilhooley

In *Mr. Gilhooley* we have the dramatization of a fourth novel. In this case I have not read the novel, but I judge it must have been about Mr. Gilhooley. The play was about Mr. Sinclair, and to some extent Miss Helen Hayes. Through the performances of these capable actors it was impossible to discover what was biting Mr. Gilhooley—A Girl or Mr. Liam O'Flaherty, who wrote the novel. If the play was supposed to be about Mr. Gilhooley, what was Mr. Gilhooley supposed to have been? I have heard somewhere that Mr. O'Flaherty is a sort of Dublin Dostoievski. One of the characters in the play was a poet who uttered some more or less Dostoievski sentiments: he complained about the death of love, and was for turning to the God of his fathers. We infer that Mr. Gilhooley was supposed to be a tortured Dostoievski character: the bankruptcy of the flesh, sin shot with remorse. But this is only an inference: there is nothing in Mr. Sinclair's performance to make us feel such a character. I am probably being unfair to Mr. O'Flaherty. I am trying to describe the play.

The story is that of an unsuccessful love affair between Mr. Gilhooley and a girl he meets outside a pub. The other characters are authentic Irish types, very well cast by Mr. Harris—within, that is, the strict limits of type casting. (You can find actors who look the part without being able to act.) As for the direction, there is less flow and rhythm than in any Jed Harris production I have seen. This may have been partly because I saw the play on Saturday afternoon, when the actors were saving their strength for the evening performance.

The best scene in the play, and the only one that came alive for me, was a morning scene in a boarding-house, when it is dis-

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covered that Mr. Gilhooley, the star boarder, has had a girl in his room all night. The slavey who makes the discovery was played by Miss Maire O'Neill. She created for us not only the sleepy and scratching slut, but the whole atmosphere of a cockroaches-and-prunes boarding-house at the waking hour. She would also have built up a high suspense as they all watch Mr. Gilhooley's door, if only the actors who played the boarders and the landlady had not dropped the scene whenever they had anything to say or do. The entrance of the formidable landlady was an anticlimax. The whole play was an anticlimax after Scene 1, and when Mr. Gilhooley shoots himself after flourishing a pistol for half an hour, the audience is inclined to smile.

Lysistrata

Like *The Green Pastures*, *Lysistrata* makes a bid for the interest of the highbrow and the uninitiated alike. But *The Green Pastures* was "commercial", and *Lysistrata* is presented as part of an ambitious program. It was sponsored by the Philadelphia Theatre Association of the late Horace Howard Furness, Jr., of whom Dr. Arthur Hobson Quinn says in a program note, "It has been his ambition to begin with the Greek drama, and to represent, step by step, the various periods in dramatic history, by their masterpieces". This is not a very reassuring scheme: there is nothing inspiring about a historical survey as such. Some periods of the past may seem relevant to the present, but a history which aims at completeness can have only an academic interest. *Lysistrata*, however, was a very happy first choice. Classical comedy seems to be perennially alive, and the success of such productions as the Moscow Art Theatre's operatic *Lysistrata*, Dullin's *Les Oiseaux*, and *Volpone*, even in the emasculated version used by the Theatre Guild, had already shown that a public which supports vaudeville and revues could be made to take great satire. The production itself, however, was disappointing.

Mr. Gilbert Seldes's translation is hard to judge from the stage. The intention of his choruses is obscure; the play as a whole lacks rhythm, and some of Lysistrata's philosophizing, which is perhaps designed to set the action against a background of the eternal verities, never came alive in Miss Violet Kemble Cooper's interpretation. But these failures were certainly not entirely due to Mr. Seldes. Mr. Norman Bel-Geddes was chiefly to blame. His setting, which consisted of a set of buff petticoats hiding the regions under the boxes on either side of the proscenium, and a tremendous pile of steps and levels rising from the orchestra pit of the 44th Street Theatre to the gate of the Acropolis at Athens, did not convince or satisfy. And by doing away with the curtain he simply foiled the simplicity of the set with the rococo interior of the playhouse.

It was when Mr. Bel-Geddes began deploying his players over his soaring levels that the latter became most embarrassing. Miss Cooper was always running nimbly, in her high-heeled slippers, up two or three flights, to reach the appropriate point from which to deliver a certain monologue. While she ran, the audience waited. The choruses, which approached the stage from beneath the petticoats that hung from the boxes, were always hiding the most important figures on the stage from three-quarters of the audience. Mr. Bel-Geddes for some reason staged several of the most important scenes as far away from the audience as he could get them. For instance, when the women swear to deny their husbands, they gather around a huge wine-bowl on the farther side of the ascent that leads to the Acropolis. There their discomfort takes the form of an extremely uncomical hysteria. These brief indications may serve to show that Mr. Bel-Geddes, though he may be a designer, is not a stage director.

In a production lacking in rhythm and essential unity, the acting inevitably becomes a series of solos. Miss Cooper attempted to hold things together, but she lacks the vital-

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ity and the sense of comedy necessary to play Aristophanes. She has extremely clear diction, a very modern-looking tea gown, and a kind of languid Alexandrianism in her "classical" postures. Mr. Sydney Greenstreet as the President of the Senate, and Miss Miriam Hopkins as Kalonika, were excellent, and when either of them held the stage a sense of performance and a rhythm were immediately felt. Mr. Ernest Truex, who returns from the war badly needing his wife, spilled the beans on his entrance and had nothing to do thereafter but bore the audience with the repetition of his symptoms.

Twelfth Night

The production of *Twelfth Night*, by Mr. Andrew Leigh, with Jane Cowl and Leon Quartermaine, has the virtues and vices of that school of Shakespeare staging which relies heavily on the mere words of the author as distinguished from his stage intentions. The diction, the phrasing, the sense of the lines is here more carefully studied than in any other of the recent Shakespeare productions which come to mind: more than in Fritz Leiber's productions, for instance, or the Stratford Players', or Basil Sydney's and Mary Ellis's *Taming of the Shrew*, or Miss Le Gallienne's *Twelfth Night*. But like these other productions it is sedentary Shakespeare, Shakespeare intelligently and comfortably read out of a book. Mr. Leigh, as though to emphasize this point, has an enormous book on the stage, and the jester changes the scenes by swinging the heavy pages open. Add to this a careful pruning of the bawdier lines, and you get, not a fresh view of *Twelfth Night*, but well-bred literary puttering; an assistant professor of English interpreting poetry to his children between puffs on his pipe.

Thus the costumes and settings by Raymond Sovey, and the music by Macklin Marrow are haphazard, perfunctory and uninspired. Mr. Leigh made the same mistake as Mr. Bel-Geddes: he put musicians in Elizabethan costumes in a box of the Maxine Elliott Theatre and thus confessed at once that what he had to offer was only a quaint and loving bit of archeology. And having taught his actors their lines, he gave them each a few romantic gestures so they would know what to do with their hands and feet. Miss Cowl is always waving weakly and vaguely to indicate salutation or farewell. Only Mr. Quartermaine, perhaps, manages to make his body part of his characterization. The jester makes breathless efforts to be lively, but his caperings are without necessary connection with the rhythm of the play.

This defines the limitations of the acting, but it should be mentioned that the Duke is non-existent; that Sir Toby is competent but uninspired; that Miss Jessie Ralph gives us a middle-aged Maria with some gusto; that Miss Joyce Carey as Olivia is much more supple and warm, much more convincingly alive than Miss Cowl; and that Mr. Quartermaine has a real interpretation of Malvolio. It is true that his Malvolio does not develop beyond the letter scene; but who understands really the animal spirits and the cruel fun which are certainly present, somehow or other, in the last scenes of *Twelfth Night*? Shakespeare was not going to show the night before without some indications of the morning after. And so it would be tempting to talk indefinitely about the questions which this production raises. With most of the original lines intelligibly spoken, there is enough of Shakespeare left to keep us wondering as much as we like. This is the great advantage of Mr. Leigh's pious method.

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FICTION

THE DEEPENING STREAM *by Dorothy Canfield* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

AMID the muddy pools and swirling eddies of modern literature, *The Deepening Stream*, by Dorothy Canfield, continues the powerful main current of American letters represented by Emerson, "the wisest American". For, despite an imperfect mastery of the art of compression and terseness, Dorothy Canfield is foremost today among those novelists who stand for sane perspective rather than sensationalism, for verity rather than realism, for selection of facts focused upon an indwelling universal law rather than a chaos of facts-for-facts'-sake, for limited free will rather than complete determinism. Thus, amidst the stultifying and stale conventions of naturalism, Dorothy Canfield is radiantly and dynamically unconventional. Her present novel, the peer of any she has written, traces the growth of a normal woman's spirit through two experiences—her girlish apprehension at her professor-father's concealed desire to pain her mother, and her mature endeavor as a wife and mother, amid the horrors confronting a relief worker in the World War, to discern through malignant chaos some pattern of beneficent order. The common denominator of the two experiences is the theme of the book: an inherently fine woman's conquest of the fear of evil, presented inductively and dramatically. The story thus rises in an intellectual crescendo: when such things as the World War can happen, how can life be worth living; how can one reconcile such hellish evil with faith in a beneficent moral order? Thus Dorothy Canfield resolutely tackles a question which has hounded the modern world to despair.

Sounding clarion-like through the heroine's experiences are the overtones of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and its story of Fate's challenge and of man dauntlessly coming out "to do battle with his destiny". Here is no Dreiserian determinist supinely resigning himself to "chemic compulsions", no disciple of H. E. Barnes whiningly blaming the universe rather than man, since "there is not the slightest iota of choice allowed to any individual". What this book does present is the powerfully moving beauty of moral heroism begotten of faith in man's power to become not the puppet but the architect of his destiny. Just as, after her father's dying words had revealed that his love for her mother was sound at the core, Matey concluded that her parents' "irritability came from the temporary color of their lives" and that they had felt "themselves perfectly able to turn aside from their crooked by-path back to the real road", so she realizes that the evil symbolized by the War was "not an indictment of the universe" but "a mistake men make". Man may of his own volition violate moral law, and bring evil upon himself; but this particular evil remains infinitesimal when viewed in perspective against an eternal moral order. Thus Matey concludes, much as did Emerson on similar subjects:

> . . . That the war had not shaken the bases of human life, but only made them visible; that human beings die tragically, having no more time left to repair their mistakes, but that their deep-rooted race goes on into new springtimes; that to have missed for a time the right path, and to be lost in a by-path is no ground for terror; that the only despair lies in thinking that one's life is all, in not seeing the vastness of which it is a part.

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I can only regret the lack of space to illustrate the rich garment of art in which this theme is clothed. I should like to speak of the vivid and beautiful pictures of the relations of Matey and her children, of that quiet Quaker home in the Hudson Valley, and especially of that deep-hearted compassion and understanding which are everywhere apparent. The book is pervaded by an atmosphere of deep repose, whimsical and mellow humor, and an engaging sanity and health of spirit.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

THE REDLAKES *by Francis Brett Young* (HARPERS. $3.00)

LIKE Shakespeare's Feste, Mr. Brett Young has a mellifluous voice. In *The Redlakes* he consistently refuses to write anything but beautiful English; and with the exception—one might almost say the intrusion—of one piece of vigorous and sustained narrative, he consistently refuses to look any fact squarely in the face. So that, as with his earlier *Portrait of Claire*, though his story has much to do with bitterness and pain, we get little but pleasure out of it—Mr. Brett Young has such an easy way with him.

Jim Redlake was the son of a brilliant novelist and a gentle, ill-treated lady; he was left to the care of his grandparents; adored by his grandfather and hated by his grandmother; he was driven by an immature love affair and his grandfather's death to find his maturity in Africa, and specifically in the Smuts-Von Lettow Vorbeck campaign; and returned to England to marry the gentle daughter of a clergyman who had once been his tutor. Through Jim and his family Mr. Brett Young offers a picture of hunting society in Leicestershire from the beginning of the century to the end of the Great War. Somehow the whole thing appears to be a little too familiar, and circumstances, even when they are as wealthy and well managed as they are here, do not alter cases. Obviously Mr. Brett Young deserves to sell his six hundred pages, because he is a very capable novelist.

But he *ought* to be a great one. The beauty of his English in general and his account of the Smuts campaign in particular (a very distinguished, very direct, and very moving piece of work) are quite beyond a merely capable writer. But otherwise he manages his "crowded canvas" through the simplest and easiest kind of massing; he sets off the noble by the gentle and the gentle by the simple; he puts the sheep on one side and the goats on the other; his characters, like the periods in an academic scheme of prose, do nothing which is likely to endanger the balance of the story. The blood of this novel runs slowly, even fitfully—there is something lazy and sick about it. One does not like to accuse Mr. Brett Young of spiritual idleness; but, however one tries to get round it, for a man with such obvious powers as he has, it can be this, and this only, which has kept him from the front rank of English novelists.

THE CONFLICT *by E. E. Kellett* (SMITH. $3.00)

MR. KELLETT tells the story of the quarrel between Egfrith, King of Northumbria and Wilfrid, Bishop of York, later to be canonized as one of the Northumbrian saints. It is a story not unlike that of Henry II and Becket, except that it is the king who suffers in the end; for the curse of Wilfrid, whom he has deprived of two sees, pursues him through the religious withdrawal of one wife, the sterility of another, the death of his brother and his best friend, down to his own death at the hands of the heathen far north in Scotland.

Mr. Kellett is no mean novelist; he knows how to make the most out of the opposition of two strong characters; and, though he has a wide knowledge of his period, he does not allow this knowledge to clog or divert his narrative. It is perhaps a pity that he should

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have committed his characters to such involved and unwieldy dialogue; there would actually have been more reality in the story if the characters had expressed themselves in a plain, unidiomatic English, and if Mr. Kellett's astonishingly rich and authentic detail had been allowed to speak for itself.

"SIR!" SHE SAID *by Alec Waugh* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $1.00)

IT IS somewhat surprising that a writer of Mr. Waugh's talents should have descended not once or twice into the dusty arena known as the Problem Of The Modern Girl; but here he is again, apparently quite content. He tells the story of two sisters, one flighty and pretty and very young, the other sober and somewhat older. The elder sister "sins" and the younger marries respectably; and it all happens in a London which is very nearly the real thing, inhabited by very nearly the real people—"very nearly" being the yawning gulf which is fixed between a good novel and a fair story. Mr. Waugh raises a dollar's worth of dust; but if he has anything really serious to say about the modern girl, he should try an earlier style. He seems to have forgotten that quite a number of people found courage and sincerity and at least the intimations of important writing in *The Loom of Youth.*

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

WOMAN UNDER GLASS *by Virginia Hersch* (HARPERS. $2.50)

THIS is a biography of St. Teresa de Ávila in in the form of a novel. With an agreeable historical fidelity Miss Hersch, who recently novelized the life of El Greco under the title *Bird of God*, has been content to trace over the line of her heroine's career and to take almost no liberties with it. A great many of the speeches of St. Teresa, of St. John of the Cross, and others, are simply copied from their writings. For this reason, as well as because Miss Hersch writes competently in a pseudo-poetic manner which is unobtrusive enough, one experiences no difficulty in reading what she has written. At times she is graceful, at times acute. She seems capable simultaneously of detachment and reverence.

Why, then, does *Woman under Glass* convey to the reader so little? Why does it leave him with less of an impression of St. Teresa than he would receive from the barest account in a *Lives of the Saints*? It must be because Miss Hersch has essayed an art-form and has in no way been successful. If one looks closely at her work one detects a deplorable confusion of styles. She borrows but she makes no attempt to assimilate. Here she has drawn upon impressionist criticism, here upon imagist poetry—and here upon the movies! Nothing is passed through a common crucible, nothing is created. And what an author fails to create a reader fails to retain. In the end we realize that even her historical fidelity is not a virtue; it is but the sign of her failure, disclosing *why* she was content to copy. *Woman under Glass* is not a new portrait of St. Teresa; it is a mere tracing with modern embellishments.

UNHAPPY WIND *by Nelson Antrim Crawford* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

FEW readers of this second novel by the author of *A Man of Learning* will fail to observe that it was written in the shadow of Mr. James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* There is a constant similarity to the experiences of Stephen Dedalus, Mr. Joyce's protagonist, not only in what Winfrid Cartwright, Mr. Crawford's protagonist, sees and hears, but in what he feels as well. *Unhappy Wind*, moreover, does not wander from the path established by Mr. Joyce in what it relates of a life from early childhood to early manhood; and the soul of Winfrid, like the soul of Stephen, is made the battleground of sex and religion. Winfrid is an unusually sensitive boy, not appreciated by his

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thers. As he arrives at adolescence he arrives at scepticism also, but to please his hysterically puritanical mother he continues to accompany her to the services of the Protestant Episcopal church. Then he meets Marjorie, who is preternaturally High Church and preternaturally libidinous. With her he floats into the environs of Romanism—and into sin. While he is debating whether to become an Episcopal priest the war arrives, putting an end to his affair with Marjorie, to that phase of his life, and to the novel itself.

One of the advertised features of *Unhappy Wind* is its hero's peculiarity of making his emotional perceptions in terms of color. For instance, if his mother is calm the sound of her voice is gray; but if she is annoyed the sound of her voice is red or orange. This phenomenon might be interesting enough if Mr. Crawford did not permit it to degenerate into a crude means of telling what might have been told more simply and more tastefully by direct statement. On the whole, it might be said that he lacks artistry in the proportion that he lacks detachment. Because his book in a bad sense is "personal", even at times descending to pay off old scores, as a work of art it is abortive and raw.

BRIDAL POND *by Zona Gale* (KNOPF. $2.50)

Most of these stories are concerned with life in very small Wisconsin towns, and most of their claim to our attention is founded upon the local color they contain. The particular kind of local color which is at once most intensely provincial and most generally interesting is that which has to do with the good housewives of these towns. There may be some connection between the intimate interest that Miss Gale takes in housewifely matters and the fact that practically all of her stories are addressed primarily to women readers. In any case, she is unmistakably most pertinent when dealing with those nasal-voiced Katy Town "ladies" who say "Well, sir" when addressing other ladies, whose deepest pride is in the cleanliness of their homes and in their cooking, who dream of buying a new carpet for the church, and who pass on recipes from mother to daughter as precious heirlooms.

The title story was included in the O. Henry Memorial collection for 1928. Though some of the other stories apparently come from an earlier period, all of them are the work of a practised, if not altogether conscientious hand. The dénouements are about evenly divided between those which are sentimentally ironic and those which are simply sentimental. One could wish that Miss Gale, who still lives in Wisconsin and whose attitude on the whole is so attractive, had remained a provincial in soul as well as in body; that she had not permitted her taste to be compromised by the dubious standards of the metropolis—particularly by those of the women's magazines.

GERALD SYKES

THESE GENERATIONS *by Elinor Mordaunt* (BREWER & WARREN. $2.50)

This novel is written with ease and grace and a competent style. Interest is sustained throughout. The atmosphere of the hacienda in Central America is beautifully done from the engagement party that opens the story to the death of Gran'mère that closes it. Yet the plot is flimsy, and only two of the characters, Gran'mère and her husband Henri de Rochecourt, are clearly etched against the intricate background of the novel. Gran'mère, indefinably present throughout the book, is the means of holding the interest in the inconsequential happenings in which the other characters are engaged. The granddaughters—Felicia, unnaturally undersexed, Carolina, oversexed, and Anna, intended to be normal—were undoubtedly invented in order that the plot might have characters for its execution. When Gran'mère holds the center of the stage the story leaves little to be desired.

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It is a pity that the narrative could not have been carried on entirely from the viewpoint of this irresistible old woman who had lived long and fully and who had come to believe that love, after all, is the *summum bonum* of human existence. Infinite wisdom is Gran'mère's as well as infinite love and deep understanding of those about her. If Gran'mère had held the threads of the story in her competent hands, if the romance that involved Max Van Rennen and Felicia and Anna had been told through the all-seeing eyes of the sweet and wise old woman, the story might have attained a verisimilitude that it now lacks. The interlude that has to do with Gran'mère's childhood and marriage to her first husband John Verney as well as the one that deals with her encounter with Max Van Rennen's grandfather are so exquisitely done as to be convincing evidence that Mrs. Mordaunt writes best when she is in love with a character, as she very obviously is with her fine old woman, who well may take her place in fiction's portrait gallery.

The plot upon which the story is hung shows the hand of its creator far too clearly. The book, delightful as it is, full as it is of color and charm, is not stamped by the inevitability that constitutes one of the first requisites of great fiction. Yet the creator of Victoria Cochrane, the little girl who marched through a hard childhood into eighty full and eventful years, makes a bid to fame no critic can deny.

GOG AND MAGOG *by Vincent Sheean* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

As A TREATISE on revolutionary Russia, introduced by a picture of an artists' party in Paris, this book has merit; as a novel, however, little can be said in its favor. Centering in its first two chapters about Molly Kèlen, the American wife of a French violinist, the story is subsequently told from the viewpoint of Molly's brother John, an impressionable young American.

After an horrific dinner party where musicians talk and drink excessively and perform rather badly upon man-made instruments or vocal chords, John leaves his sister's home with a Russian singer, Terschelling, to whom his boredom, which she seems to share, has drawn him. During his visit to Switzerland and his weeks at Terschelling's home in Moscow, there is a somewhat wearying succession of long dialogues in which the pros and cons of the Russian situation are presented—adequately, we are willing to admit, but not in such a way as to advance the story or to reveal the characters involved. The people seem to have been chosen, not for any merits of their own, but that light may be thrown on the hodge-podge that is Russia today. John is the average American making his first acquaintance with the Soviet; Terschelling is the artist who "does not concern herself with politics but is a Russian, Monsieur"; Madame Cordier is the deposed aristocrat whose hand has been kissed by Nokolai Alexandrovich and who is now suffering much because of the dirty Bolsheviks; Sheila Rudd is the visionary American girl, burning to help the oppressed. The characters fit neatly into the mosaic intended to make up a picture of Russia in turmoil, but they do not move as characters in a novel. Their personal emotions never stir the heart, and though their words are frequently illuminating and succeed in presenting some new aspects of a struggling people, they themselves do not come alive.

Yet the theme of the treatise is clear: a great force, as difficult to understand as the mythical Gog and Magog of Ezekiel and Revelation, is at work in Russia. Chaos has resulted. Chaos may continue. "My heart is heavy," says John in conclusion, "and this air is crowded with darkness." Out of it all something may come. John and the reader wonder and cannot foretell. A novel may well exist without thesis, but there can be no novel unless life has been breathed into the characters.

EUDORA RAMSAY RICHARDSON

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SEED ON THE WIND *by Rex Stout* (VANGUARD. $2.00)

MR. STOUT'S second novel, following *How Like a God*, is another stunt in technique. In this study of a woman who has five successive lovers and a child by each of them, he begins with her latest experiment and works back with ever increasing dramatic intensity to her first. The problem must have been a difficult one and Mr. Stout has worked it out with skill and distinction. He also tells a good story. Better still, he approaches the study of the woman and her lovers and children with intelligence and without the slightest apparent striving for either sensationalism or smartness. Nevertheless the volume is unimportant.

For a story of this kind, a story which deals with the tangled and confused impulses and desires of men and women against the social and economic background in relation to their need for love, sexual fulfillment, children, security, for all the deepest and most insistent demands that the emotions make on the human spirit, Mr. Stout remains singularly placid and unpenetrating. He is content to tell his story along the outlines of his logically prearranged pattern, ignoring the insoluble complexities, even the indication of them. He remains on the surface of the extraordinary situation which he has conceived while moving his pieces about in his looking-glass-world chess game. So far, Mr. Stout, for all his skill, has failed to be either important or convincing in his study of character.

FRED T. MARSH

THE MUSICALE *by Francis Steegmüller* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.00)

ONE does not know to what extent writers of the age and venturesomeness of Mr. Steegmüller are willing to acknowledge themselves the inheritors, if not the followers, of literary methods used in the past. Possibly Mr. Steegmüller would not care to trace the pattern of his present work farther than the formula of Mrs. Woolf, but some readers will find that the author has much in common with Henry James. Like James, he aims to show less of life and more of living. With the industry and patience of a miniaturist he unfolds before us a purely cranial drama illuminating a section of Main Street trod by those who by their education and profession are irrevocably committed to "culture".

Yet here, too, under the calm surface of a conventionalized, unperturbed, almost stagnant life there are hidden strong human emotions, ardent longings, daring wishes. But these are never permitted to reach the stage of outward clash and action. Their latent power is made known only through the thoughts of the different characters. Being interested in revealing human minds and motives in their truest aspect, Mr. Steegmüller chooses a musical gathering at the home of the heroine as the occasion for his disclosures. Under the influence of music one is most alone, and aloneness is the state in which one is most honest with himself. His style and treatment are well suited to his purpose. Above the tonal concert, admirably described, there is a symphony in mutes, skilfully orchestrated and eloquent beyond mere words, to which Mr. Steegmüller makes us listen and of which fact we are constantly aware. But can an author hide himself behind the cranial wall of his characters and not thereby limit his freedom of attack?

LOUIS RICH

GLORY PLACE *by Marian Bower* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $2.50)

THERE is a certain charm to stories that have agreeable villains for heroes and Anthony Gateways, villain that he is, is agreeable. It is his ambition to become master of Glory Place, a vast ancient mansion in East Anglia, whose rightful owners, the Gaisleys, are too poor to occupy it. Anthony learns that through an

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indiscretion of an ancestress he himself has Gaisley blood. He becomes possessed of a desire for power—the old Gaisley power. Little by little he works his way. He gets hold of some money. He betrays the trust of the woman he loves. He all but kills his wife. One man he drives to suicide. Another he shocks into sudden death. Cautiously, assiduously, always within the law, he advances towards his goal. It is no lack of forethought nor courage, no awkward birth of conscience that defeats him, but the exigencies of chance —the one element he cannot bend to his dominant will. The story has the virtue of growing better and better as one reads on. All through this long book (five hundred pages) one is conscious of Miss Bower's hold on her subject, characters and atmosphere.

JENNY HEYSTEN'S CAREER *by Jo van Ammers-Küller* (DUTTON. $2.50)

THE solidity, the factuality, the nicety of this story suggest its Dutch origin—something of Ter Borch, something of Metsu. To ask to be reminded of Rembrandt also might be to ask too much. The scene is the contemporary Hague. The action is concerned with the stage and emotional life of a young daughter of the impoverished aristocracy. Jenny Heysten's life is (during the years we follow it) lived much in and about the theatre and is colored with the same amusing squalor we find in some of Leonard Merrick's stories of trooper life. Jenny is a pretty good actress on the stage but she becomes an even better one in her private life. She cannot stop acting; not even when (after a couple of futile affairs) she is seriously in love and anxious to leave her old stage life behind her and become the wife of a wealthy Jonkheer. To attract him she pretends to be an ingénue—an impersonation which he greedily accepts as the real Jenny. When she wishes to correct this impression she shows herself as a hard-boiled theatrical hussy and overdoes this also. She is, after years of sham, unable ever to be her actual self. But the theatrical life has done her more harm than to make a twenty-four-hour-a-day actress out of her. She has rubbed up too long and too intimately with cheap, careless and fatuous people. She has lost her earlier aristocratic fastidiousness. Spiritually—like the dyer's hand—she is colored with the dye she has handled. The book is not democratic in its trend nor is it sentimental (but neither is the art of Ter Borch). The author seems to think that, no matter how nice you are to start with, if you associate with the mediocre and indiscriminate in time you become as they. With a great deal of subtlety and insight Mrs. van Ammers-Küller shows how it is not the affairs the girl had that harmed her but her attitude towards them. If she pictures without romance the cheapness of the stock company's life she is also as unromantic about her aristocrats. And yet she is too good a realist to be cynical or "disillusioned". That the one group is cheap and the other group dull does not in the least enrage her. She has a strong hold on life and for that reason a strong hold on her art. May she write many more books as good as this and *The Rebel Generation.*

ESTHER FORBES

LOVE'S NOT ENOUGH *by Simonne Ratel* (FARRAR & RINEHART, $2.00)

THIS novel, which in France received the *Prix Minerva* for 1929 and in America has been considered worthy of being "adapted" by no less a hand than that of Dr. Joseph Collins, remains nevertheless a poor novel. After having read it, one is likely to recall that Miss Ratel is a regular contributor to *Minerva* and to confess that the adaptation is not too free to admit a number of annoying gallicisms.

Relying entirely too much on the charm of the Burgundian landscape and the youth and beauty of her heroines, Miss Ratel tells the story of three young girls who, while spending their vacation in the country, meet love for the first time in the form of three young

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men from the neighboring château. The intellectual and already disillusioned Antoinette, the beautiful and rather colorless Annonciade, and Suzon the little flirt, in their quite different manners of handling the situation, exaggerate the types they represent. Moreover the factitious introduction of Annonciade's "crush" for Antoinette, with the subsequent Gidian insinuations implied in Antoinette's frequent tirades against love, loses whatever value it might have had as a complication of so simple a plot when Antoinette and Annonciade fall in love with the same man. One may well suspect the author of having stressed this theme for the same reason which dictated her unjustified and skilless use of the interior monologue: because it's being done this season in Paris. Miss Ratel's style is that of the excellent journalist she is, sometimes prosaic, sometimes lyrical, but always verbose.

BELOVED! (O MON GOYE) *by Sarah Levy* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $1.00)

IT IS DOUBTFUL whether this novel will enjoy any greater success in America than it did in its native country. Surely the present almost literal translation, through which the undomesticated French idioms peek mischievously out at the reader from every page, does little to enhance its value.

The perennially interesting "mixed marriage" theme is unfortunately treated by a hand only slightly more delicate than that of Anne Nichols. Occasionally relieved by heavy humor, this story of the love affair of a stereotyped Parisian Jewess (who is no more successfully characterized than the somewhat similar Nadine of Paul Morand's latest novel) with an unconvincing though typical young Frenchman plods wearily on to its inevitable happy ending. The constant clash, at times so fictitious as to suggest the old problem novel, between her orthodox ideals and background with his easy-going attitude toward religion, money and property leaves one quite unmoved.

MORNING STAR *by Ada Negri* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

SHORTLY after the war, Ada Negri abandoned the humanitarian and feminist poetry she had been producing to return to the happier vein of her early works. *Morning Star*, like *The Book of Mara*, employs a sort of lyric prose, whose appeal is as direct as that of her first verses, to record the impressions of her own childhood. Dinin, the little Lombard girl, with her aged grandmother and her widowed mother who works in the factory, lives in the porter's lodge of a palace. This simple child, made to live in just such a garden as she occasionally plays in and to roam forever in just such an imaginative world as she constructs from the reading of sensational novels, must nevertheless go through the routine to become a teacher and thus escape the life which is killing her mother. Her wild brother Nani with his unhappy marriage and pathetic end exists outside her world, which gradually begins to revolve around her love of poetry and the desire to express her own feelings. There is nothing either new or great in this book; its slight charm lies in the freshness and delicacy with which the author sketches her simple characters, but, as in most prose-poems, the result is rather a group of vague symbols than a family of living persons. The story of Ada Negri is also the story of Grazia Deledda, save that the Sardinian's is better written.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

WINDSINGER *by Frances Gillmor* (MINTON, BALCH. $2.00)

THERE are crime waves, war waves and Negro waves in fiction, so it is only logical to suppose that the latest Pulitzer prize novel will give birth to an Indian wave. Be that as it may, no one can accuse Miss Gillmor of aping *Laughing Boy*, in spite of the fact that she, too, has chosen to write of the Navajos.

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Windsinger lacks that contact with present-day life that made *Laughing Boy* more of a story of the Indian in conflict with white men than merely that of an Indian. Though white men do figure in the story of Windsinger, they are not a real part of it. It remains essentially all Navajo, although with a theme which—beneath the tribal customs, the chants and the habits of the Navajo—is universal. It is the story of a poet; his childhood, his youth, his marriage, his search for truth, his failures and, in the end, his hope in his son. Early in his life young Windsinger knows that he is to be a chanter, a healer. He marries The Clear-Eyed One, who, in spite of her first sympathy, attempts to make him subordinate his gift to practicality. He goes in search of the Gods, and he becomes a prophet. Though the people heed his prophecy it does not come to pass, and he is ridiculed where he was revered. In old age he regains something of that reverence, and the love of his wife remains with him, in spite of the differences in their beliefs. This is a simple tale; hardly a story at all, it seems to flow so smoothly. There is a lyrical quality to the author's prose that makes it at times almost poetry. The pictures of Navajo life are colorful with both sensual and spiritual color. One reads the book with the feeling that here is something which is both beautiful and fundamentally true.

TO WHAT GREEN ALTAR? *by W. B. Maxwell* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $1.00)

On page one of *To What Green Altar?*, we see Margaret Dacre reproaching her mother for watching the couple across the street. On page two we see Margaret hurrying up to her room so that she can watch them. This impression which we have of Margaret as a prig and a hypocrite remains with us throughout the book, though the author does his best to make us think of her as admirable.

The man who is being watched is Andrew Lane, a drunkard who lives with his mistress in this otherwise wholly respectable town. Before long we discover that Margaret is madly in love with Andrew, and when the mistress dies, she forces her way into the house, takes charge of Andrew, and marries him. Henceforth she makes his reformation her life work. For a time, while money lasts and they can travel, they are very happy. Andrew no longer drinks and is fond of Margaret. When the money is gone and they must return to London, bad times set in that go to worse until we see Andrew once more a dipsomaniac, terrifying his wife with his sexual excesses, and beating her in their frequent quarrels. Through all this Margaret sticks to him:

"Can you understand that I loved you, yourself, for yourself, because I couldn't help loving you, from the very beginning? . . . But I loved you also because, you were to be my work—my grand task—the purpose that kept me alive, and gave any meaning or sense to my life. You offered me all that, and in return I was to save you. Oh, Andrew, it is a bad day for saviours when they find they've made a mess of it."

Needless to say, the mess is straightened out before the end. Somehow the book is not so impressive as it might be, and the action is sometimes unaccountable. One doctor, at the beginning, should be drummed out of the medical profession for the secrets he tells.

THE BITTER TEA OF GENERAL YEN *by Grace Zaring Stone* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $2.00)

A BOOK too important to be neglected yet irritatingly inadequate is this story of the internal struggle in China, as seen by a very objectively-minded Occidental; important because it touches upon vital points in the understanding of a people; irritating because its observer is a colorless person, seeing all things, hearing all things, experiencing all things colorlessly.

Megan Davis comes to China to marry a medical missionary. He is not able to meet her, due to uprisings that keep him in the in-

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terior; so for the time being she is quartered with the Jacksons, a missionary family in Shanghai. Although she has come half across the world to be in China, her lack of curiosity after her arrival is astounding. With a doctor, she goes to help evacuate an orphan asylum in the danger zone, and is almost killed by General Yen's soldiers; is rescued by the general himself, and becomes his house guest until the Communists take the city and the general is killed. During the whole of the time, Megan acts with a narrowness and blindness that cannot possibly be typical. The general is suave and more subtle, a relic of a civilization that cannot be understood by the casual Occidental mind. Although the general plays poker and owns records by Caruso, and Megan wears a Chinese dress and make-up, "never the twain shall meet", and Miss Stone has proved her point beyond a doubt, as well as several other points along the line.

It is hard to think of such a book more objectively written. Megan sees dead boys lying in the street, like discarded sacks of meal, and, as far as the author suggests, has not a reaction in the world; not a regret, not a shudder, not a pity. She just sees them. This lack of feeling throughout robs the story of conviction; so that it becomes coldly symbolic rather than warmly human.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

OUT OF CHILDHOOD *by Irina Odoevtzeva. Translated from the Russian and illustrated by Donia Nachshen* (SMITH. $3.00)

LOUKA, fourteen, awakes one morning from a troubled sleep. Everything seems to her strange, cold, and cruel. The rose garden bleakly outlines a shadow of black wings. The furniture in her room makes grimaces, gathers about her, threatens her. Each lamp, each book, each piece of bric-à-brac seems suddenly invested with potential calamity. Louka cries out to her mother. She is frightened. There are peculiar pains in her body, pains she has never known before; her head seems, somehow, unpleasantly tentative. Her mother informs her, with little consolation, that she is growing up. Thus begins Irina Odoevtzeva's story of an impetuous, imaginative, and rather tomboyish girl's exit from childhood.

We follow Louka to Paris; then to practically all of the more fashionable bathing places of the Continent, until her elder sister is eventually married off to a Russian emigré with money. Throughout it all, the girl, balanced precariously on the ridge between childhood and womanhood, asks frightfully vital questions. The reader is left with the feeling that some day Louka will find an answer, even though she be forced to invent a formula of her own. *Out of Childhood* is useless to children of fourteen; and the spectacle of a young girl playing jokes on her older sister, having romantic sessions with Azrael, and doing handsprings from fairy tales to Freud, can scarcely interest grown-ups.

QUIET STREET *by Michael Ossorgin* (DIAL PRESS. $2.50)

MICHAEL OSSORGIN, a Russian nobleman exiled by the Bolsheviks because he was unwilling to become a part of the great, and often obtuse, Camaraderie, has written a lengthy novel of the Red Revolution seen through bourgeois eyes. He has maintained throughout the book a humorous and delightful detachment which is quite un-Russian. Like Gogol and Lermontov, he does not take advantage of the frailties of his weaker and more despicable characters; rather does he draw from them a mild amusement.

Never boring in its content, *Quiet Street* goes hastily from character to character: the composer (with a defective enunciation) who discovers in the midst of Revolutionary chaos that he is a genius; the philosopher who succeeds, by sheer disinterest, in immunizing himself against any reactions he might have to the current terrorism; the ancient ornithologist and his grand-daughter, around whom

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the story centers; the army officer, legless and armless, who learns to perform certain personal functions for himself—then broods over his misfortune until finally he casts himself to death from a window ledge; and the vodka-steeped and prosperous executioner who has not enough nerve to kill a pig.

From a domesticity whose only excitement is the flight of swallows over Moscow, the house of the old ornithologist is converted into a lodging place for workers. A former maid is settled comfortably in the grand-daughter's bedroom. The professor is forced to sell presentation copies of his own works to obtain bread, and his grand-daughter becomes a pianist at communist club houses, where she is given provisions and clothes in proportion to the entertainment she affords her music-loving listeners. The house in Sivtzev Vrazhek, once hospitable and gay, once the gathering place of Russia's less flamboyant intellectuals, becomes complacently dull and colorless. In the background, war distastefully replaces the off-stage noise of an approaching carriage.

If, from his Parisian retreat, Michael Ossorgin has flung a bitter word at the Social Democratic Party, he has done it unobtrusively. *Quiet Street* is a novel profoundly human, and well worth reading—even by the most feverish Leninite.

PAUL GAUNT

FRENCH LEAVE *by Jeannette Phillips Gibbs* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.50)

THIS is the story of a liaison between the expatriated American Charles Clayton and Muriel Wilkins, daughter of a rich and conventional American, conducted in Paris to the consternation of the Wilkins *père et mère*. In America, Clayton's wife Emily struggles to forget her "mistake", while their son, as in *Strange Interlude*, grows up to be a chip of the old block in every sense of the word, thus furnishing Emily with the crowning insult. The author has done a good job with Muriel and Charles, but the minor characters have little individuality. The narrative movement is retarded again and again by inconsequential chitter-chatter, such as the progress of Muriel's French, how Emily ate her soup in Paris, what her second husband read in bed, and stock phrases and repetitions occur frequently.

French Leave might have been more successful had Mrs. Gibbs eliminated all but the two major characters. Her portrayal of Charles Clayton is vigorous and original; in his presence Muriel comes to life, and their relationship is presented with force and insight.

CLARICE LORENZ AIKEN

ON FORSYTE 'CHANGE *by John Galsworthy* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

THE appearance of a Galsworthy item is a sufficiently momentous event, but the reappearance of the Forsyte family brings the pleasure of a reunion. Here are nineteen stories, which use the *Forsyte Saga* as a basis and background and serve as annotations on the fortunes and natures of what is probably the most interesting (and certainly the most thoroughly analyzed) family in English fiction. More light on Swithin, old Jolyon, Timothy, Nicholas, Ann, Hester, and Soames will be welcomed by every enthusiastic reader of the *Saga*; though a reading of the *Modern Comedy* is not a prerequisite, for all the incidents in the present collection are anterior to the second trilogy.

These stories, written in the master's usual prose, easy but strong, dignified but colloquial, are not of a piece. A few are light in tone, perhaps slight in content; others are more serious and show the force of unsuccessful love; some give the relation of a Forsyte to the non-Forsyte world, and some the interrelations of the clan itself. Irene appears in "Cry of Peacock" and then only behind a window; Soames is the principal person in but two. The final story, "Soames

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and the Flag", has without doubt the most power: the years 1914-18, as they bring to England the tides of war, are lived through by Soames and interpreted through his mind, and the result is a most excellent summary of the War as it would be received on Forsyte 'Change. That such a volume—made up of episodes in the lives of characters who have already walked through hundreds of pages—of episodes—should be written and eagerly accepted is further proof of Galsworthy's interest and skill in characterization.

MEMOIRS OF AN INFANTRY OFFICER *by Siegfried Sassoon* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

MANY a reader of the *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* who had never followed the hounds or read a single Surtees found a real delight in reliving with Sassoon his days as a sportsman. There will also be many a reader of this sequel to the first *Memoirs* who has never been a man-hunting man or read all the current war books (hazardous job!), but who will immediately discern the hand of a craftsman and the spirit of a poet.

And therein lies Sassoon's own charm: he is a gentleman and a poet. It is a needless task, and one perhaps fraught with injustice, to compare the present *Memoirs* with the war volumes by Remarque, Zweig, Mary Lee, Hemingway, Tomlinson, and even the poet Robert Graves (there are, by the way, reciprocal references in Graves and Sassoon); but the sensitivity of Sassoon, his gentle but unflinching viewpoint, his avoidance of the ugly side of war without a negation of its grossness, make his record an unusual chronicle. The poet goes to war and sees the unseen, a bit of sky here and a lovable person there; he has a glimpse into one of the verities or he receives in a flash an insight into the irony of the gods. The gentleman lives in the trenches, goes on bombing parties, gets wounded and decorated, returns to England, is offended by the uselessness of the whole ghastly mess and tries to do something about it; he is still a gentleman and, what is more, writes like one.

The disguise of fiction is a thin one; though not strictly so, this book is rightly called "memoirs". When such a personality goes marching to war, poem or autobiography or novel will be enriched. Meanwhile the cause of English prose will not suffer.

RICHMOND P. BOND

TALES FROM THE ARGENTINE *edited by Waldo Frank* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $3.50)

SINCE the editor's avowed purpose in presenting this volume is to give North American readers "some rounded sense of the Southern nation", it is to be regretted that the writers confined themselves almost exclusively to the external aspects of their country. The gauchos, and even a rather sentimental anaconda, who figure prominently in these tales and sketches are reasonably interesting, their background undoubtedly picturesque; what one misses is any real penetration into human character and, consequently, the "rounded sense" which Mr. Frank wishes to convey. The lack of contact is increased by the translator's often clumsy attempts to render slangy dialogue, and because, in spite of the elaborate emphasis upon local color and the indigenous elements employed in the tales, their manner is obviously derived to a wide extent from European models. Particularly noticeable is the over-figured style of the regional writers of nineteenth-century Spain. But the literary derivation itself is a minor consideration. What seems to be at fault is the authors' approach to their subject matter and their mode of attention. For the stories, with a single exception, reduce themselves to mere superficial glimpses of Argentine life.

The exception is found in "Rosaura", a fragile and gentle little story by Ricardo Güiraldes. Here the setting, while constantly present, is held subordinate and appears only as the necessary frame for the pathetic story

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of a village girl's deception. Every moment in Rosaura's existence is informed, but not dominated, by the peculiarly local atmosphere through which she moves. Hence both setting and character are interfused and have more significance than is possible when the background becomes too obtrusive and when the characters appear only as figures shown in a detailed and highly colored landscape.

EUGENE ARMFIELD

THE CROSS BEARERS *by A. M. Frey* (VIKING. $2.50)

PRESENTED by its publishers as fiction, this book, *The Cross Bearers*, has all the appearance of being a literal transcription of one man's experiences in the war. Like his middle-aged hero, Private Funk, Herr Frey was attached to the German Medical Corps during the four years of the war, and served variously as stretcher bearer, hospital aide and clerical worker. No one reading the book will question the authenticity of Frey's record. The events set down here multiply in grotesque and impossible horror, until the numbed mind becomes almost incapable of perception. Courage and ambition, martyrdom and sacrifice, all lose their common meaning. Vice and filth, pain and disease and death are the only enduring realities; the only remaining sentiment is a kind of animal longing for food and relief and rest.

No other novel of the war has amassed a record of purely physical horror which surpasses this one. But several have stated that horror more successfully. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque relied for his effect, not upon the mere recital of horrifying detail, but upon a description of the changes wrought by horror in the minds of his characters. The impact upon the reader was doubled. Frey, on the contrary, has heaped up a mass of grim and unflinching details which are terrifying in themselves, but which the mind almost refuses to digest.

MARGARET WALLACE

MORALS FOR MODERNS *by Elmer Davis* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $2.00)

THE TITLE of Mr. Davis's collection of short stories serves as little more than a hindrance to appreciation. It seems almost impossible nowadays to adorn a tale with social significance without cramping the story itself. Nevertheless, one hopes for much after reading the first story, "Bachelor Girl". The characters and their emotions seem so genuine, the plot so natural and easy-going, that one expects the later stories to deal as quietly with perplexity and frustration. But after "Bachelor Girl" there is no longer any need to worry about the implications of Mr. Davis's book. The stories become machine-like, even banal. "Count No Man Happy" may be an illustration of the pressure a smug society can bring to bear upon an honest man; but the method of making this clear is obvious and flat; the events are ill-chosen, and their unfolding too heavy, too precise. Smugness is not subtle in its workings; but Mr. Davis should be. More, certainly, might be expected from the author of *Portrait of a Cleric*.

KENNETH WHITE

THE ERL KING *by Edwin Granberry* (MACAULAY. $2.00)

THE hitherto unexploited coast of Florida is the scene of this thoroughly over-wrought study in adolescent psychology. So great is the author's fondness for "atmospheric effects" that all the elements of the book—plot, characters, theme—become irrecoverably blurred in the reader's mind. It is impossible to distinguish through the excessive rhetoric anything like an ordered outline of plot. The book may better be described as an orchestration of the mood which the haunting recollection of Ponce de Leon produces in the consciousness of a sensitive boy. Mr. Granberry should do better work when he masters a more simple style.

WILLIAM TROY

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THE FOOL OF THE FAMILY *by Margaret Kennedy* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

THIS should be a popular novel; it has, far above the average, the appeals of romantic fiction. It has the lovable though irresponsible bohemians out of William J. Locke, without the latter's easy sentiment; it has something of the fantastic plotting of the *New Arabian Nights*; it has the deft touch, the warm feeling, the humor, the happy ending. Added to these traditional attractions is modern frankness about sex. The author nowhere plumbs so deeply into her characters as to make us uncomfortable at depravity or exalted at nobility; her deftness in large measure consists in stopping just short of the thorough-going treatment which would transform her novel into either a dull and pretentious or an important one.

Comparisons with *The Constant Nymph* are inevitable, for this carries forward the adventures of two of Sanger's sons. The most notable quality of the earlier novel, I think, was the creation of eccentric characters, endowed with singular life. The opening of that novel, with its Alpine setting and its Sanger circus in full career, is unforgettable; the lawlessness of the Sangers was brought into vivid relief by contrast with their conventional visitor. Various as were its threads of interest, the novel had a central strand in the sad romance of Tessa. The present novel is a sequel in fact and also in the special sense that its author depends on *The Constant Nymph* for much of the background which gives her characters depth and her incidents emotional heightening. Without it her characterization might seem a bit thin, the wild conduct of the Sanger brothers a bit unmotivated. This novel is narrower in range, lighter, less fully conceived.

But it displays the same gifts which won Margaret Kennedy so enthusiastic a following. One can wholeheartedly praise Gemma, Sebastian's "girl", who even more than the Sangers and far more than the colorless heroine has the salt of life in her. The novel begins with Venice and first love. The scene shifts to the Alps, where come the two brothers, Caryl and Sebastian, the former a steady youth with a conscience, the latter a musical genius like his father, like his father also without conscience and with a bright eye for women. They are accompanied by Gemma, her baby, three Russian musicians, and a puppet show on a donkey. Their subsequent adventures with a despicable Fascist marquis threaten melodrama but are kept on the whole in the tone of *opéra bouffe*. The latter half of the novel, with an English setting, brings about the seduction of the heroine by Sebastian and her final somewhat unsatisfactory reconciliation with Caryl, who, if he is not a genius, proves himself a better man. Thus romantic adventure and passion are skilfully mingled with humor and fantasy, and the whole is made plausible, or almost so, by a thoroughly realistic treatment and considerable psychological insight.

We must thank the author for being so highly entertaining. At the same time, because of her gift for humorous and penetrating yet sympathetic characterization, she comes so close to being something more than entertaining that we wish she had succeeded. She suggests at times what someone of higher gifts, or more ambitious purpose, might do in handling the ethical problem of the "bohemian of genius". It cries out for a treatment like Molière's, in the mood of high comedy but with an underlying seriousness.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

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BIOGRAPHY

SWIFT *by Carl Van Doren* (VIKING. $3.00)

LET it not be thought that Carl Van Doren's *Swift* is just another biography written to the order of some enterprising publisher eager to catch the market for racy anecdote about the notorious dead. The author himself tells us in his "Bibliographical Note" that it is twenty years since the book was first projected. Unlike most of his predecessors in writing about Swift, he has "preferred to examine the entire evidence, to select what he believes to be truth, to tell it, and to leave gossip where gossip belongs". Furthermore he has consulted scrupulously "all the general histories of the age, all the biographies of his [Swift's] contemporaries, all the memoirs and diaries and letters and special studies and collateral sources". Mr. Van Doren has then been no student of a book claimed by Swift, his *New Help of Smatterers, or The Art of being Deep-learned and Shallow-read*. He has however examined the companion volume, *A Universal Rule of Reason, or Every Man His Own Carver*.

For Mr. Van Doren does carve for himself a Swift with the great merit (in biographies) of being consistent. Swift was compounded of pride, hatred, and lust for power. When he went to Kilkenny School, he was to all intents and purposes the Swift who became the greatest man of his age. At six years old and on page nine he is playing a part in "the drama of neglect". On page ten he is the "tragic hero". On the same page the drama becomes melodrama. On page fourteen Swift, a mere boy at Trinity College, is "filled and driven by a sense of power". There is, however, not the slightest evidence that Swift as a boy and youth was anything but uninteresting. In justice to Mr. Van Doren it must be said that when Swift's life does become interesting for its own sake, the style becomes a trifle less strained. In the same way when he has a straightforward narrative to tell, the author bothers less about what went on in Swift's inner consciousness. To be sure he does call Swift, on page twenty, while Swift was the oafish dependent of Temple, "a conjured spirit". On page forty-five Swift is "a tiger". Later in the book and in the due course of time he becomes merely "the Dean of St. Patrick's".

Swift was compounded of more elements than pride, hatred and lust for power. There was the side to Swift which made Addison call him among other things "the most agreeable companion" of the age. Mr. Van Doren in no way makes intelligible how this fantastic romantic character could be called "agreeable". Nor in Mr. Van Doren's portrait does one find the man who broke his shin "in the Strand over a tub of sand left just in the way", and who complained of that accident in ordinary human terms. Mr. Van Doren seems to admit the difficulty of simplifying motives when he says, "The growth of Swift's purpose was of course not obvious to him, and it was not regular". By accentuation and by simplification the author tries to make Swift terribly terrible—as if Swift's life as told in the modulated tones of the *Dictionary of National Biography* were not terrible enough.

Although the book does not pretend to be literary criticism, Swift's works do come in for discussion. After summarizing *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to their Parents or the Country*, Mr. Van Doren

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says, "Of course the proposal would not be carried out. Nothing so logical, nothing so mad and merciful, would ever be carried out. That was mankind. That is mankind". Swift has an argument in this pamphlet, and he uses the fantastic suggestion of solving Irish problems by eating the children "stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled", as means of contrast to point his argument: of taxing absentee landlords, or using only Irish products and encouraging Irish manufacture, or learning to love Ireland. He calls his serious suggestions "vain, idle, visionary thoughts", and as if that were not enough to catch the dullest reader's attention, he prints his serious suggestions in italics. Is it to be supposed that Swift was adored by the Irish people because he wrote a pamphlet which, according to Mr. Van Doren's interpretation, expressed his passionate hatred of human life and human activities? Is it to be supposed that Swift wasted a moment's thought about how sad it was that his "mad and merciful" suggestion of eating Irish children would not be carried out, or that he drew any conclusions about mankind unless they misread his meaning?

Mr. Van Doren treats *Gulliver's Travels* in much the same way. He tells the story, emphasizing the disgusting and the horrible. "Gulliver's travels", he writes, "were Swift's travels, disguised with Swift's wit, loaded with Swift's hate." Yes, and organized with Swift's intellect. Mr. Van Doren would make them, like *A Modest Proposal*, merely a book to shock our sensibilities by the intensity of Swift's passion. Yet the last section of *Gulliver* is a painstaking essay on the nature of man, attacking persons like Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, who were inclined to see man as naturally endowed with impulses toward the good. Bolingbroke understood Swift's intention perfectly well as a letter from Gay and Pope testifies, and blamed "it as a design of evil consequence to depreciate human nature". Swift himself says in a letter to Pope, "I have got materials toward a treatise, proving the falsity of that definition *animal rationale*, and to show it would be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of misanthropy, though not in Timon's manner, the whole building of my Travels is erected". Again and again in "The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms" his definition is illustrated. The Yahoos make no other use of their reason than to improve and multiply vices. Since Gulliver has himself "some rudiments of reason" added to the natural pravity of the Yahoos, he is forced to leave the happy land of horses. Among the Houyhnhnms reason is not "a point problematical as with us, where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of the question". They even have no word for "opinion". The etymology of Houyhnhnm is given as "the perfection of nature". But from Mr. Van Doren's account of the book one would be forced to conclude that *Gulliver's Travels* is nothing but rage against humanity. If this is true, why then is it not exactly in Timon's manner? "Yet Swift was not a Timon," writes Mr. Van Doren, "bawling and railing."

Swift is a mysterious person. One quality he had which Mr. Van Doren does not pay much attention to, and that was his acute perception of the truth, of the fact, unromantic, unsentimental. Perhaps Swift is the last great man who ever viewed the world completely in that clear light. Until someone with an approach to this clearness of eye and head writes about Swift, the mystery will remain unsolved. Mr. Van Doren is content to make Swift more horrible, more terrible, more shocking, than he has ever appeared before. He succeeds in making him grotesque.

THEODORE BAIRD

SAVONAROLA *by Ralph Roeder* (BRENTANO. $5.00)

THE life and times of Savonarola have lent themselves with peculiar aptness to the glib adumbrations of many biographical cheapjacks. He is consistently labelled a victim of

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repression and hysteria; the hounds of Freud are hot upon his traces. Consequently we must be grateful to the discernment of Mr. Ralph Roeder, which has enabled him to write the maligned Dominican down simply as a man of unwavering conservatism at odds with an age of emotional extravagance.

Savonarola to Mr. Roeder is Conscience in a clerk's habit: a tonsured raven anathematizing with bell-toned eloquence the vanities of his flock: a spiritual hygienist conjuring up hell-fire to purify weak vessels. With reportorial exactness and none of its bad English, Mr. Roeder follows this Renaissance Isaiah through the turbulent waters of fifteenth-century clerical and secular politics, through a long series of monastic reforms, conquistador Charles VIII's Italian campaign, the quizzical favors of the Magnificent, the wholesale scourging of the Florentine conscience with its bonfires, religious riots and children's crusades, through the defiance of Pope Alexander VI and excommunication, and then, like a star that flares and falls, to the eloquent smoulder of charred bones on the Piazza of unregenerate Florence.

Mr. Roeder handles his facts deftly, and moderates his imaginative play. His book is likewise distinguished by quite fine writing. It recommends itself to the hack-biography-sated reader as a work expressly fresh and good, and to the collector as a neat bit of printing. There is an adequate bibliography appended, and the illustrations are fine examples of offset lithography.

LEO KENNEDY

MARGARET FULLER *by Margaret Bell* (BONIBOOKS. $.50)

MARGARET FULLER, a striking figure in her own day, is recalled by the general student today for only a few of her achievements and associations—for her friendship with Emerson, Alcott, and others of the Transcendentalist group, for her editorship of the *Dial*, the literary organ of the Transcendentalist movement, for her casual connection with Brook Farm, for her authorship of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, perhaps also for her strange marriage with a revolutionary Italian nobleman, and for her stranger death in a shipwreck off Fire Island. But her personality, conspicuous and boldly-defined as it must have been to have impressed itself so deeply upon her contemporaries, has been obscured by a mass of conjecture and contradiction.

Miss Bell has related the story of Margaret Fuller's life in an orderly and interesting fashion, but she has brought nothing new to the task, either in material or interpretation. In particular, she has added nothing to our conception of Margaret Fuller's character or temperament. Where Katharine Anthony sought to fit the rebellious and discordant facts of Margaret Fuller's life into a psycho-analytic formula, Miss Bell placidly reverts to an older method. The result is almost as romanticized and eulogistic in tone as the original *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, and it is little more convincing or satisfying, from the point of view of the contemporary reader. Miss Bell bases her estimate of Margaret Fuller's importance to posterity upon a wholly exaggerated notion of her importance to the feminist movement. She ignores almost completely the work by which Margaret Fuller may best be remembered—her critical and scholarly labors, and the general ideas underlying them.

A YANKEE TRADER IN THE GOLD RUSH *by Franklin A. Buck* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

FRANKLIN A. BUCK, descended from Judge Sewall of diary fame, seems to have inherited a talent for journal-keeping. He was a young man of twenty, and had just left his home in Bucksport, Maine, to take advantage of the opportunities which New York in the mid-nineteenth century seemed to offer, when the news arrived of the discovery of gold in California. Young Franklin was as

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imaginative in his commercialism as he was enthusiastic and volatile. He shipped for California, after investing all his available capital in a supply of goods for trading purposes, and arrived in San Francisco in August of the year 1849, well ahead of the great emigrant tide plodding overland.

Looking about him, Buck decided that there was more money in trade than in digging. Rumor had not lied, and gold dust was plentiful, but commodities were scarce and sold for ten times their cost. Buck tried everything in turn—store-keeping, real estate and mining stock speculation, banking, milling, ranching and dairying, even, now and then, a little gold-mining. His optimism was never entirely justified. The incredible and capricious fortune which visited other men eluded him, but he never lost his zest for life, his taste for novel experience, or his faculty for keen, fresh observation.

His letters, written over a period of thirty years to his sister in Bucksport, are among the most genuine and amusing records we have of pioneer days in California. Buck's Yankee humor was excellently adapted to the portrayal of those rough-living times. His Yankee thrift induced him to set down, in astonishing array, the prices, wages and winnings which changed hands where men were caught by the fever of gold and gambling. His interests were universal, and his letters afford us an extraordinarily complete description of California in the fifties, its vigorous, turbulent, colorful society, and its gradual and painful growth from lawlessness to civilization. The letters have been ably edited by Katherine A. White.

MARGARET WALLACE

THE LIFE STORY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG *by Susan Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe* (MACMILLAN. $5.00)

For its greater part this volume is a history of the Mormon church with its virtues enhanced and its sins glossed over or ignored, as, for example, in the case of the Mountain Meadows massacre, where the Mormon tradition that Indians slew the hated immigrants passing through from Missouri is preserved, although John D. Lee, the Danite, who was shot, under a sentence passed by the United States Court, as a leader of Mormon avengers who had disguised themselves as red men, had confessed, with the side allegation that he was obeying Brigham Young.

All this is to be expected and need not be here controverted. The real interest of the volume lies in its picture of home life in the polygamist's family. He had more wives than any other Mormon—nineteen in all. There is natural curiosity as to how such a frequent father and husband got on with his flock. For one thing, he was both a master and a diplomat. All the wives, save Ann Eliza, the last, would appear to have been content and well-cared for. There were fifty-one children, of whom twelve are still living.

The Salt Lake City family lived in the Lion House, presenting the picture of a great communal residence, where the women spun, wove, cooked and reared their children. Sitting-rooms were provided for the wives, who do not seem to have spent much time in rocking-chairs, while a big parlor served as the prayer-room. The author of this book was the first child to be born in the Lion House, which had replaced an overcrowded Bee Hive. Most of the doctoring was done by Aunt Zina (a midwife), Aunt Clara and Aunt Eliza, as the leading wives were known. Strict sanitation was the rule; even the milch cows were washed in soap and water. So it was that the household was remarkably free from illness. Diphtheria never got in, but measles did, though the kids wore bags of camphor and asafoetida around their necks for prevention. Herbs and "consecrated oil" were the remedies.

New England habits ruled, and New England meals were served. The father of the flock ate alone in the Bee Hive and fared simply. Two meals sufficed for him—break-

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fast and supper. Brigham drank only cold water or buttermilk, liked apples and always carried candy and raisins in his pockets for the children. He gave up tobacco after a struggle; was opposed to all strong liquors and enforced abstinence upon all others within his reach. Evening prayers with song were regularly held, after which "Father would say 'Come girls, let's have some music' ". This they would furnish. He encouraged dancing, the theatre and all wholesome amusements, but forbade cards. He built a Farm House outside the city where the family had many enjoyable frolics of the New England pattern. His daughter has him just and kind, with lips "not unduly set". In his portraits they appear as tightly closed as those of another celebrated Vermonter, lately President of the U. S. A.

Mrs. Gates's picture is one of happiness and prosperity, so far as she saw. It is probably a true one. At any rate Mormonism has flourished until it holds the balance of political power, not only in Utah but in all the Rocky Mountain States. It has developed world-wide missions, an art and racialities of its own, and provides the most powerful United States Senator in the person of Reed Smoot, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, who writes a foreword to the book, ending: "The story of Brigham Young's life can only be a reflection of the lives of the multitudes who with him hoped and toiled to conquer the desert".

JOHN MARSH, PIONEER *by George D. Lyman* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

MR. LYMAN with commendable industry and intelligence has hunted out the strange story of Dr. John Marsh, the first American physician to practice in California, and leader of the "Bear" party that raised that banner of revolt and deposed Governor Pio Pico, the Mexican executive. Born in Danvers, Massachusetts, of Pilgrim ancestry, graduated from Harvard after being expelled (but later reinstated) for participation in the students' rebellion of 1820, he betook himself to the military post at the Falls of St. Anthony, in Minnesota, to teach a garrison school.

Taking on a half-breed girl who bore him a son for whom Abraham Lincoln—then a gawky clerk in Cameron's store at New Salem—cut out toys, he became an employee of the Indian service, and by an act of baseness brought on the Black Hawk war. This over, he made for California, abandoning the woman and her child. He established himself in the San Joaquin Valley, to which he at once began to encourage immigration. Thus he accumulated an American following strong enough to defy the Mexicans and to stand by Captain John C. Frémont when he came exploring. Frémont's flag, with a grizzly as its emblem, was the signal for a rising led by Marsh, and made the way easy for American occupation, which was sealed by the final outcome of the war with Mexico. After a long separation during which the mother had died, his quarter-blood Indian son came upon him at the big stone house he had built, and finally, as the result of some efforts to punish Mexican cattle thieves, Marsh was killed by a vaquero on September 24, 1855. The quarter-caste son won half of his estate after a lawsuit.

DON C. SEITZ

HENRY IRVING *by Gordon Craig* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $3.00)

NO ONE today is better suited to write of Irving than Gordon Craig, because he was a member of the Lyceum company, because he is the son of Ellen Terry and because his European fame in the theatre makes what he has to say on the subject worth listening to. In the bright but fitful illumination of these pages, Irving flashes before us with his magnetic personality and painstaking art, making plays to his own measure in his own world of the Lyceum, with the world of London crowding eagerly over its enchanted borders.

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"The stately, the weird, the impossible," says Craig, "these he liked, and they went with him to the end of his days." It does not matter that in the opinion of many he could not act, or speak, or walk. He was possessed of a demon. He was hypnotic. He was extraordinary. So well does the author evoke his old master and chief that the defence of his peculiar diction seems unnecessary; and the title of "Übermarionette" a misfit (although doubtless a high tribute); and his difference with Shaw unimportant; and his connection with the new, revitalized theatre (where both actors and plays will be relatively superfluous) far-fetched. Here he stands, the last, and perhaps the greatest, of a long line of actors; the last in a great tradition; and the last bulwark against the naturalistic theatre. For what had the "play of ideas" to give him of "the stately, the weird, the impossible"?

Mr. Craig can be penetrating, he can be paradoxical, he can be provoking. And his English is like that of a man who is lecturing to a foreign audience, or who has lived so long abroad that his own tongue has grown—has it not?—a trifle strange.

OLGA KATZIN

CARDINAL NEWMAN *by Lewis May* (DIAL PRESS. $3.50)

THIS life of Cardinal Newman is brief enough to please the casual reader, and also contrasts rather pleasantly with much of the recent flood of biography in adhering to the objective method. There is, of course, something of the freshness of hero-worship in Mr. May's reverence for the frail man of Oxford who, almost single handed, started a religious revaluation in England whose end is still unpredictable. The objective method of the biographer as applied to the Cardinal is thus not free from a subjective bias on the part of the biographer himself.

Mr. May confesses freely, for example, that in re-reading Newman's works and in writing his life "I have seemed to feel his presence very near, and to behold again, amid the shadows, his grave and gracious countenance". These are the words of one whose judgment might easily be swayed to passionate defence and to deep prejudice against those who, in the course of events, opposed the great Cardinal. And it is, in fact, in his historical discussions that Mr. May is the least effective.

After all, it is a delicate matter to discover the roots of those misunderstandings and disagreements, alike with early fellow workers in the Established Church and, later, with co-workers in the Church of Rome, which tried the spirit and mortal strength of Cardinal Newman. To take the instinctive position that Newman was always right, and particularly so in his judgment as to methods after his entry into the Catholic Church, is to overlook something of the breadth of the problem with which the Catholic Church must necessarily deal. The sensitive Oxford scholar would not, in all likelihood, be thoroughly in tune from the very first with the policies of a Church dealing all over the world with rich and poor alike, with the highly educated, with the middle class and with the general masses. The real greatness of Newman shines forth more often in his ready obedience to decisions he could not fully understand than in the actual superiority of all his judgments and desires. In other words, Mr. May sees the Cardinal too often as a martyr—a rôle which Newman himself would have been the first to reject.

On the other hand, Mr. May has caught up admirably the mental transitions of Newman's mind and the flavor of his literary and rhetorical achievements. The biography is one to enliven the interest in Newman as a man of letters and as an artist in the portrayal of the human soul and intellect. Mr. May's own style discloses the effect of his close association with the Cardinal's works. He has made the discussion of literary power in itself a literary delight.

RICHARD DANA SKINNER

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NORTHCLIFFE, *by Hamilton Fyfe* (MACMILLAN. $4.00)

FOR better or for worse Lord Northcliffe was responsible for the development of "the new journalism" in Great Britain. But by whatever standards we may judge his contribution to modern life, whether we praise his energetic and inspired quest for whatever might amuse, entertain or interest the readers of his papers, or condemn him for his sensational and sometime cheap handling of the news, it cannot be denied that Northcliffe was an important and significant figure in British life. Moreover he was an intensely interesting and unusual man.

This biography by one of his most faithful lieutenants, written in a staccato, journalistic style, is a tempered eulogy. It is not a critical study of the part which Northcliffe played in either British journalism or British politics. It was inspired by the author's affection for his "old Chief". But nevertheless it traces Northcliffe's career, with its astounding successes and its tragic end, in so complete and interesting a way that it makes fascinating reading. It is "an intimate biography" in every sense of the word and Northcliffe stands revealed with all his virtues and faults. No one less close to Northcliffe than Mr. Fyfe evidently was could possibly have written it.

We find here in full detail the story of his journalistic beginnings with the publication of *Answers*, the start and phenomenal growth of the *Daily Mail*, the struggle for control of *The Times*, the growth of the Northcliffe influence before the War, his mission to this country, his tremendous work as "Minister for the Destruction of German Confidence" (a task he undertook rather than accept a cabinet post), his political quarrels with Lloyd George, and the closing years of his life when his mind was slowly giving way. Through it all runs the constant striving of Northcliffe to push up the circulation of his papers. His appeal was always to the masses and not to the classes. His standards were those which expediency demanded. The key to his life was this insatiable desire for circulation, not primarily either for wealth or for power, but as a measure of his success as a newspaperman.

ROOSEVELT: HIS MIND IN ACTION *by Lewis Einstein* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.00)

IN THIS brief biography of President Roosevelt we find an unusual and fascinating portrait of the man who came to typify so greatly the America of his day. It is a critical study, but one which is permeated with sympathy, understanding and admiration. Roosevelt was a great enough man, in the author's opinion, "to be represented as he really lived and not to be portrayed solely radiant in Olympian sunlight".

In his manifold interests, his tremendous energy, his thirst for every experience which life could offer him, and his intense desire for fame, Mr. Einstein finds in Roosevelt a significant resemblance to the great men of the sixteenth century. He does not believe that he was in any sense a typical American, (despite his successful efforts to appear one and the acceptance of such a characterization of him abroad) on the ground that he was born with such advantages in wealth and social position and opportunity as come to few men. But nevertheless it cannot be denied that of all our recent presidents he was the one above all others who, during his term of office, typified the country. In his later years, while he remained static—for Roosevelt's fundamental beliefs did not change—the country marched on ahead to face new problems, and certainly it was because of this that his life closed in such political adversity.

As Mr. Einstein points out, never did a man make such efforts to leave a record of his life which would assure his fame for

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posterity. His autobiography and the *Life* by J. B. Bishop, which he supervised, were prepared with this end in view. "No untrue word was ever writen in these," Mr. Einstein says, "but much admittedly is left unsaid about his political life to raise higher the pedestal on which he stood." And in the same way Roosevelt again and again wrote letters to his friends and saw to their circulation in order that a record of his achievement might be preserved as he wished it to be. It is the value of this biography that it can recognize such aspects of Roosevelt's character and treat critically many phases of his career even though it is so thoroughly sympathetic. It is a stimulating and highly readable book.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

THE LIFE OF MAHOMET *by Emile Dermenghem* (DIAL PRESS. $5.00)

M. DERMENGHEM, a French historian who has made a specialty of studying the lives of mystics, is excellently qualified for the task of writing biography of the great religious and military leader who in the seventh century established the monotheistic rule of Islam over disorganized and idolatrous Arabia. M. Dermenghem is a thorough, affectionate scholar; he writes engagingly; and in particular he has an understanding of mystic experience. As the result of a personal residence among the Arabs, a careful study of the *Koran*, the *Sunna*, the *Sira*, and other Moslem texts, he has been able to reconstruct the career of Mahomet and, employing a semi-fictional technique, to breathe new life into it. We see Mahomet first as a man universally respected for his simplicity and honesty; then he is permitted by a fortunate marriage to have leisure and to live by himself now and then in a cave; then he is reluctantly persuaded by the Angel Gabriel of his religious mission; he dictates the *Koran*, making free use of the Old and New Testaments; for many years he suffers every form of persecution, offering no resistance and winning converts by the sheer force of his faith; then his Hegira, the battles, his transformation into a general and a politician; and finally his triumphant return to Mecca.

M. Dermenghem has not written a popular biography of Mahomet. He has taken for granted in his reader some knowledge of Mohammedanism, and in certain places he has even seemed to address himself to a restricted circle of Orientalists. On the other hand, the cultured reader with a fair amount of interest in the subject cannot but find his book valuable. It is scholarly, it is unbiased, and it is directed by a genuine insight.

JOHN WESLEY *by John Donald Wade* (COWARD-MCCANN. $3.00)

DR. WADE is a member of that group at Vanderbilt University which has given us the "Fugitive" poets. His life of Wesley represents a new phase of American scholarship, for although widely read in his subject he has treated it in a manner as steadfastly artistic, and even as playful, as that of Mr. Lytton Strachey might have been. His book bears no relation therefore to the "solid" academic biographies of the past; it is written in an impeccable style and reflects the most urbane tendencies of the day. Indeed, if it is open to reproach at all it is not for being ponderous or professorial, but for hanging its portrait of the ascetic and earnest founder of Methodism in too precious a frame.

John Wesley was most certainly an inspired and lovable man. An interesting one moreover, offering many problems to his interpreter. Why, to choose but one example, did he feel the necessity in middle age to take a vulgar wife? His two attempts in this direction would indicate some significant trait of character. If we desire to learn what it was, however, we must not look to Dr. Wade. Dr. Wade can make us feel the disagreeableness of the burden that Wesley insisted upon taking upon himself, but ap-

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parently he is not interested in the human causes which led to it. In other words, he has not sought to re-create Wesley as a man; he has written a prose poem with Wesley as the subject almost by chance. (It may be significant that the idea for writing about Wesley was suggested to him by another.) As a flight of style his book has a beauty of its own. It reduces the life of the great Arminian to a stream of unfaltering elegance. Every word is chosen with exquisite care. This is fastidious writing—even if it is not the best kind of biography.

GERALD SYKES

HENRY OF NAVARRE *by Henry Dwight Sedgwick* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $5.00)

SOLDIER, *grand amant*, statesman, Henry IV of France merits understanding as a nation-builder. From his vigorous, democratic youth to his death at the hands of the mad monk Ravaillac, the man was a force for order based upon tolerance. The unwillingness of nobles and prelates to accept concentration of power along with tolerance led to over-centralization in government and the abuses of the eighteenth century. The Edict of Nantes (1598) and Henry's marriage with Marie de' Medici (1600) represent stabilization—the one political, the other domestic—in the life of an imaginative realist. Henry was above all a Frenchman, and to this day perhaps more comprehensively embodies racial qualities than any other French hero.

The present volume is easily, cheerfully written. While uninspired, the writing is clear. Often an anecdote or a letter animates the recital of facts; and the spirit of the King at play is allowed to quicken the grave history of a leader at work. There is ample, possibly too ample, discussion of Henry's love-life. Assuming that dalliance was his weak point—he would scarcely have called it such—it is nevertheless true that the man was seldom if ever a slave to his passions. D'Aubigné's remark that the King, before and during a battle, "left nothing to accident", would seem a better cue to his real character as would-be or actual head of the state than any sentimental episode, or series of them.

ARMAND BURKE

TWO YEARS *by Liam O'Flaherty* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

IN THIS book Liam O'Flaherty shows himself a romantic of the school whose credo Goethe has formulated once and for all: *"Da wo du bist nicht da ist dein Glück"*. All romantics have been characterized by their extreme predilection for flight; and it is only a distinctive mark of this school that flight is always conceived of in spatial terms, that Place is endowed with those properties which allow it to become an object of desire.

From the remote Aran Islands, romantic enough themselves to attract anyone not born among them, Mr. O'Flaherty went to London with a passionate determination to see the world. Having only just recovered from his wounds in the war, and being disillusioned about one type of violence as a mode of expression, he was at first delighted by the solid charms of London. He was in rapid succession a brewer's helper, a hotel porter and a filing clerk. But London was too overlaid with conventions and restraints to hold one so definitely on his way as Mr. O'Flaherty at that period. He shipped as stoker on a tramp bound for the Argentine. At Rio de Janeiro he jumped ship and came upon many adventures both in that port and inland, where he barely escaped being hired as a pedagogue. Back again in England he was soon off on another voyage; this time to Salonika and Smyrna—place-names that did not hold their virtue for the young Irishman in quest of beauty and perfection. The description of post-war degeneration in those ports is much the most effective section of the book; and the account of the whole crew's surrender to a week's debauch is cer-

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tainly the most amusing. Mr. O'Flaherty describes in detail his own case of delirium tremens. The next voyage was to Canada, where the author was occupied as farm hand, lumberman, factory hand, and tramp. By crossing the border at a quiet spot he was easily able to enter the United States and spend some time in both Boston and New York. Here he was engaged in his widest variety of jobs: mill-hand, story writer, baker . . . But the list is too long. Mr. O'Flaherty was truly Protean.

Because of its graphic impressions of places, people and fields of activity the book has distinct value as a contemporary document. For the example that it provides of the enormous potential experience open to the modern man unhampered by any positive values or convictions, it possesses an immediate significance. What is feeble in the work are those sections in which Mr. O'Flaherty endeavors to extract a meaning from his experience. Much of his abstract speculation dissipates in a mist of rhetoric and even his mental processes become twisted and separated. He exhibits the most startling inconsistencies of viewpoint: on one page, an admiration for tradition and an ordered social discipline, on another, an enthusiastic support of the I. W. W. To introduce the problem of sincerity is to tread on very delicate ground. But Mr. O'Flaherty is not the first novelist to have his sincerity questioned only when he offers us a work of autobiography. (Stendahl was another, and his example is even more instructive.) Sincerity in writing a letter, a diary, or an autobiography, is difficult because one is unprotected by the stringent demands of an objective art. In an epoch when personality is at such a loss to know itself in any true or ordered fashion, when frankness too often means bravado and simplicity merely self-deception, such an expert craftsman as Mr. O'Flaherty would do better to seek self-expression through some less obviously personal medium.

WILLIAM TROY

THE PASSIONATE REBEL: A ROMANTIC BIOGRAPHY OF LORD BYRON *by Kasimir Edschmid* (BONI. $3.00)

HERR EDSCHMID'S book is rather a novel founded on the life of Byron than even a "romantic" biography. Though the main facts of Byron's life are not violated, what Edschmid is interested in is mainly Byron's love affair with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh. The magnificent opportunities given by his more normal adventures with Lady Caroline Lamb, Lady Oxford, and the Guiccioli are apparently passed by, while Byron the poet is completely ignored. So the novel really stands or falls by the depiction of an incestuous union. The question is whether the author has brought to his work a power of feeling and a depth of interpretation sufficient to raise the novel from the rank of the merely casual to the universal. Edschmid can write, and there are throughout the book flashes—but only flashes—of conversation and comment which light up into sudden meaning the clouded atmosphere. Perhaps the real failure of Edschmid's book lies in the weakness of the expressionist method in coping with figures conceived by nature in the grand manner. Of all the men and women who entered into Byron's life, Augusta was probably the least interesting, and so with her at least the expressionist method might have more chance for success. Herr Edschmid does make Augusta faintly understandable, but oddly enough the figures which live more than any others are Byron's mother, his servant Fletcher, and Mary Chaworth. Indeed the depiction of the poet's early life and first love is far more successful than the portrayal of the Augusta episode. There is nothing deliberately erotic in Edschmid's interpretation of the affair; he shows restraint and good taste in his writing; but internal drama is lacking. *The Passionate Rebel* is a clever piece of writing, but with Byron for subject cleverness is not enough.

GRENVILLE VERNON

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FITZ-GREENE HALLECK: AN EARLY KNICKERBOCKER WIT AND POET *by Nelson Frederick Adkins* (YALE. $5.00)

THE Knickerbockers! What diverting suggestions the very name conjures up! Irving, Paulding, Halleck, Drake, and finally Bryant and Cooper, who brought the group together in the famous Bread and Cheese Club! "We are laughing philosophers," wrote the authors of *Salmagundi*, defining the Knickerbocker spirit, "and clearly of opinion, that wisdom, true wisdom, is a plump, jolly dame, who sits in her arm chair, laughs right merrily at the farce of life and takes the world as it goes." The voice of a settled and prosperous commercial community, of a journalistic town-spirit, responsive to the current reaction from the super-heroic and sentimental, the Knickerbockers owe much of their charm to their incongruous mixing of sentiment and humor. Especially is this true of Halleck, whose forte Bryant defined as "ludicrous contrasts, produced by bringing the nobleness of the ideal world into comparison with the homeliness of the actual". Thus the "Croaker Papers", on which Drake collaborated, ring the changes on the theme that "existence is a merry treat" while using satirical laughter as a means of rendering eccentric foibles ridiculous.

Lowell called Halleck a "pseudo-Don Juan", and doubtless Byron, whose work he edited, encouraged Halleck, of both Puritan and Cavalier derivation, to mix imaginative seriousness and burlesque. While "Marco Bozzaris" is suggestive of Byron in its devotion to Greek freedom, Halleck's "Fanny" is in the manner of "Beppo". For "Fanny" satirizes the social aspirations of a newly-rich merchant and his daughter, endeavoring "to carry the reader far away on a wave of sentiment and to leave him suddenly startled and disillusioned on the sandy shore of common sense". "Alnwick Castle" reminds one of Scott in its picture of the pomp and splendor of the high-born Percy's feudal home, but at the end this picture ironically fades into that of a modern "market town". And "Young America", Halleck's last ambitious poem, satirizes the sentimental notions of American idealism by personifying the nation as a boy who is too idealistic to become a Preacher, Soldier, or Teacher—a boy who ends by marrying "A Rich Wife".

Indeed, this pervasive warring between the ideal and the real seems to be the common denominator of most of Halleck's activities. At a time when democracy was considered divine, he spoke of himself as "an open, frank, outspeaking and avowed monarchist, devoted to the godly government of the one, and detesting the ungodly government of the many". At a time when America throbbed with perfectibilian and humanitarian faith, Halleck's *Epistle to Robert Hogbin, Esq., Chairman of the Committee of Working-Men* ridicules the "impulse divine" dictating revolt against "laws, churches, and marriages" as well as visions of a Utopia where "no infants are born under six feet in height". After the onslaughts of deism and transcendentalism on ecclesiasticism, the elderly wit repeatedly expressed the deepest respect for the Catholic Church—in the words of a friend—as "a Spiritual Power organized and established on fixed canons for the conversion, the solace, discipline, guidance, and repose of erring, afflicted, wayward, and weary humanity".

Such is the subject of Nelson Frederick Adkins's biography, a beautifully bound volume printed by the Yale University Press and based upon a Yale doctoral dissertation. After reading those modernistic biographies in which guesswork masquerades as creative portraiture, it is a rare delight to encounter a book distinguished for monumental industry, for scholarly honesty and precision, and for comprehensiveness and judicial insight. New and authentic evidence appears in the form of some fifty-odd letters printed for the first time. Mr. Adkins has exhaustively ransacked every contemporary newspaper and

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magazine for the authentic colors which have enabled him to paint a three-dimensional portrait of Halleck, his spirited contemporaries, their reading public, and their interrelations. In one sense the book is thus an amazingly detailed and convincing study of the literary and social conditions of the age. Halleck's literary sources are traced through a host of writers, and Mr. Adkins follows every step of Halleck's long career from the counter of a Connecticut store, through the weary days in New York counting-houses and hilarious evenings at some simple inn, through the European trip which gave him sight of Coleridge and Scott, through his great fame, to his last walks on the Guilford streets with his green cotton umbrella. But Mr. Adkins endeavors not only to explain and describe his hero; he writes an excellent chapter, "The Man of Letters", "to consider critically his literary work", to "discover his strength and weakness as an artist". Tribute is paid to Halleck's felicity of expression, his simplicity and terseness, his melody and lyricism, his gallantry, and especially his mixing of irony and sentiment. Yet Mr. Adkins thinks that these contrasts became "tragic; they are seen as the inevitable struggles of a mind seeking rest and finding none". Halleck was unable to reconcile "the ideal world typified by a devotion to the past, and the world of daily experience whose presence he found inevitable". Intellectually shallow and uncultured, he was without poetic subtlety; he was indifferent to the darker problems of conduct. As he himself said, he was "but an amateur in the literary orchestra, playing only upon a pocket flute". The youth enamoured of the "delights of another world" of romance, who told Drake "it would be heaven to lounge upon the rainbow and read Tom Campbell", grew up in a "bank-note world" as the business secretary of Jacob Barker and Astor. His work, minor as it is, is important because it represents a literary record of a focal chapter in the intellectual history of America.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

FROM TOULOUSE-LAUTREC TO RODIN *by Arthur Symons* (KING. $4.00)

IN THESE thirteen essays on certain Impressionists and their contemporaries, we are given every opportunity to estimate Mr. Symons's position as a critic. In the first essay, for instance, we have something about Toulouse-Lautrec's life, something about his painting, and something about contemporary Paris life (which last Mr. Symons can describe more brilliantly than anyone else alive today). There would be nothing wrong with such a threefold treatment if the parts were not inextricably confused, if the confusion were not between esthetics and ethics, between art and life, and if it did not result in essentially "literary" interpretations such as this: "*Le Sommeil* is superb; it shows a half-naked woman in a state of stupor. She might, for all I know, dream of this sentence of Beaudelaire, et cetera, et cetera". Such a "literary" interpretation interposes itself between Mr. Symons and his object, so that we learn quite a lot about Mr. Symons and nothing very much about *Le Sommeil* or Toulouse-Lautrec. And we can find the reason for this confusion in one phrase: "Perversity! the most sublime and the most sinister word that exists . . ."; for this word, that has to Mr. Symons almost every shade of meaning but no precise definition, imposes its hierarchy of loose meanings upon the whole essay with the most disorderly results. But if we continue in this book a little longer, we shall find a sobriety in the essays on Dégas and Moreau, an immediacy in the portrait of Beardsley, and certain sound and independent judgments in the essay on Rodin, which are simply due to the fact that Mr. Symons is not, at the moment, the victim of his own pleasurable and acquired obsession about Evil.

We cannot take Mr. Symons as a writer on esthetics very seriously, because Mr. Symons likes to take his esthetic to the Moulin Rouge and the *hotels des sports* and mingle it with cocottes and absinthe and perfumes and sin—in a word with "perversity"; but we can take him seriously as a writer. When his interpretation is most "literary", then his prose is stylized—it preserves all the cadences, all the mannerisms, all the vocabulary of false beliefs, of a period when style was literally pursued to death; but in those moments when his enthusiasm is infectious, his judgments sound and generous, and his wide experience and reading properly applied, when, in fact, he ceases to identify himself with a generation long dead and long without the power to influence us—then he achieves a personal style, then he is himself. It is these moments that we have to consider, for they account for Mr. Symons's survival, and they prove that this survival is due to something more than mere inability to change.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THE WHEEL OF FIRE: ESSAYS IN INTERPRETATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S SOMBRE TRAGEDIES *by G. Wilson Knight* (OXFORD. $5.00)

MR. KNIGHT'S attempt to create a new form of Shakespeare interpretation which, while considering all of the tragedies rather than single works, emphasizes the "temporal" and "spatial" elements and the poetic symbolism, proves vastly more successful than T. S. Eliot's ill-advised introduction would suggest.

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For by treating the plays in their relation to each other he arrives at an outline of the Shakespearean metaphysic; and his division of the tragedies into those which express the Hate-theme and those "which analyze evil in the human mind" presents itself as a very acceptable conclusion to all that precedes it. Moreover the interpretation of Hamlet as a "sick soul" (in the words of William James), and the comparison between Shakespeare and Tolstoy thereby involved, is at once (rare virtue in someone else's interpretation!) both suggestive and convincing.

But it is not so much these isolated points which strike us upon reading this book as the originality of Mr. Knight's point of view. Avoiding the maze of detail into which commentators invariably fall, the interpreter seizes upon the intangible elements of the work he is discussing: its intellectual or imaginative atmosphere, its themes and their variations, the rapport between the protagonists and the world in which they act.

CALIBAN IN GRUB STREET *by Ronald Knox* (DUTTON. $2.50)

THE brilliant author of *Essays in Satire*, that Chestertonian masterpiece of gay fireworks, now turns his attention altogether to religious questions, handling them with the same refreshing humor that characterized his discussions of psycho-analysis and college theses. But beneath this sharp satire and this rippling conversational style, enriched with numerous unexpected and extraordinarily apt images, no one in reading his latest book can fail to admire Father Knox's foundation of sound logic.

For under such arresting chapter headings as "The Boom in Religion", "The Higher Cretinism" and "Bungling Up Damnation" we find a series of far from arrogant debates on the most vital religious issues of the day: the meaning of religion and the faith of the future, the problem of immortality and the claims of spiritualism, the divinity of Christ and the value of revelation, the causes of contemporary unorthodoxy and the reality of hell. The army of intellectual half-believers against whom the new champion of Christianity defends the pass single-handed is composed of the literary symposiasts from whose chaotic professions of faith he has mercilessly taken his texts. Rebecca West, Hugh Walpole, John Drinkwater, Arnold Bennett and Bertrand Russell, when called upon, stammer some feeble improvization only to be graded zero by this relentless yet genial catechist. And he never dismisses them until he has laughingly exposed the origin of each proud little heresy.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

AN HOUR OF ART *by Walter Pach* (LIPPINCOTT. $1.00)

RULES lead neither the artist nor the connoisseur to his goal, says Walter Pach. But the exchange of impressions and search for reasons after the fact is enjoyable, and may clear the way for new impressions. Hence the existence of this book, a sort of brief trip through the world-museum of architecture, sculpture and painting, with Mr. Pach as a sympathetic and intelligent guide.

He begins by distinguishing between the naïve conception of art as a representation of things in nature, successful in proportion to its fidelity; the more advanced formula of imitation plus idea—the "art" that tells a story—the mother weeping for her children, the soldier saying goodbye to his sweetheart, et cetera, and finally, genuine art. Just what the essential element of genuine art is, is of course not exactly specified. He does divide it into the "classical" and the "romantic", two differing yet complementary aspects. "Naturalism" to Mr. Pach is simply the reaction from the too great dominance of one phase or the other, leading the artist to seek refuge in nature. The rest of the book is a sort of definition of this essential quality of art.

LESLIE AULT

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH HUMOUR *by Louis Cazamian* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

HUMOUR is a capacious word and any discussion of it must be selective according to some chosen definition. When Mr. Priestley wrote his little book, *English Humour*, he chose as his definition, "Thinking in fun while feeling in earnest", and, of necessity, he discussed only outstanding figures. M. Cazamian, having more space—this volume closes just before the Renaissance and other volumes are promised—has chosen to discuss many unimportant as well as many important authors. He differs from Mr. Priestley in the definition of humour and he is more comprehensive. By humour M. Cazamian means a quality that partakes of irony, that approaches wit, the method of which is implicit rather than explicit. "The essence of humour is to be conscious, instinct with purpose." Together with irony and wit it has a double intent, employs double meanings. "Now such a double intent, if refined and abstracted into a pure clash of ideas or words, is just what is called wit." Such an intent nourished on concrete experience is humorous. Likewise, irony which employs the methods of humour ". . . is not parted from humour . . . irony is in fact a variety of humour with a range of fine intermediary stages". Therefore, "It is . . . a fallacy to say that humour implies an element of tenderness or love; the association is perhaps a sentimental illusion of critics, chiefly English".

Now no one would expect to find much of that sort of humour in the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxon was genuinely empirical, he had "a supple sense of the reality of things", especially of creature comforts; but "he would hardly entertain two ideas at a time", and he was only slightly capable of "a conscious restraint of speech with an apparent unconsciousness". None the less he had the fundamental qualities of the humorist, a sense of reality and a command of his reactions; and if the humour he produced was embryonic, it contained the seed of later English humour. With the French invasion new qualities were introduced. The French brought with them everything from *l'esprit gaulois* to *l'esprit de finesse* and in so far as this spirit was self-conscious and implicit it conduced to the sort of amalgam humour was to be. It was out of the sober, almost sombre, attitude of mind of the Anglo-Saxon rather than out of "merry England" that English humour grew, but it needed the addition of Norman vigor. It gained its duality from its grip on reality rather than from the cleverness and agility of the French mind. "Humour was born when the austerity of the Saxon was fused with Norman mirth." The Puritan who soon appeared on the scene dealt also with self-restraint, was concerned with the actualities of experience, with moral meditation; but whenever he relaxed his stiffened mood "a deepening of consciousness which a moral meditation of life had induced, might spontaneously act in the same way as a duality of meaning". And so England had in it the elements to produce a Chaucer; a man deeply alive to the reality of things, to the unreasonableness of things, to the centrality of life, capable of dealing with men and things with tenderness and irony. Chaucer, not having the word humour, spoke of "subtiltee and heigh wit". He could use that weapon with sympathy keeping his eye on normal human nature as his guide. That, in brief, is the thesis M. Cazamian presents and ably defends with many shrewd distinctions. He is most interesting when he is dealing with Chaucer or making analyses. Some may quarrel with him and prefer Mr. Priestley's genial discussion of English character. But as the book stands it is assuredly worth careful study, especially since it is the first attempt to cover this subject thoroughly and competently.

J. BRYAN ALLIN

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A VARIED SHELF

LETTERS OF HENRY ADAMS *edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $5.00)

In a letter to Henry Adams his friend Clarence King remarked: "I grieve that you cannot go to Mexico with me; all I lack is a pessimist addicted to water-colors and capable of a humorous view of the infinite". The pessimist has been known before; we now get a glimpse of the amateur artist and the humorous observer. The letters supplement the autobiography and help us to a better knowledge of a distinguished personality and a brilliant mind. The *Education* gives us a formal account of its author, solely in connection with his problems in history and education; it makes few references to his travels and omits entirely the years of his married life. The letters supply the lack and the informal and personal view.

The present volume includes the years 1858-1891, and the presumption is that a second volume will complete the collection. The work of editor and publisher has been well done, as befits the subject. If one should venture any criticism of the editorship, it might include the wish for fuller explanatory notes (for the aid of the mere unhistorical reader) and the regret that there is not a wider circle of correspondents. An occasional impression of sameness may largely be accounted for by the fact that so many of the letters have the same recipients. Surely Adams wrote occasionally to others beside his brother, Charles M. Gaskell, Lodge, Hay, and Mrs. Cameron. Such occasional missives might well reveal their author in various and interesting lights.

It has seemed strange to many that a man so gifted by nature and connection, so exceptionally trained for the work, should have never even attempted statesmanship; and it has seemed probable that much of his disillusionment with it was due to his abstention, inasmuch as a worker cannot despise his own efforts, while a detached observer finds it not only easy but rather pleasant to despise the work of others. At all events it was an early decision, as the letters make clear. In 1867 he wrote: "I never will make a speech, never run for an office, never belong to a party. I am going to plunge under the stream". Was this due to pride? Two years later he noted: "I should be better pleased if I could only find out what I myself want. Certainly not office, for except very high office I would take none". Did he ever regret the decision? In 1881 he declared: "I have never known a young man go into politics who was not the worse for it. I could give a list as long as the Athanæum Catalogue. . . ." Yet we may wonder if he was the happier for his unsoiled spectatorship.

There are early letters from Germany, from a clever, rather self-conscious, rather supercilious young man, who shows at the same time a sense of humour. The correspondence from Washington just before the Civil War includes some frank and vivid descriptions of our country's leading politicians, usually uncomplimentary. Seward, indeed, Adams admired; but one can hardly forget the picture of his manners. "The other evening at our house, after taking off his boots to dry his feet, in the parlor, he patted mamma on the head like a little girl, and told her that she might come down after dinner and pass the evening with us, if she felt lonely without her children." A later description of the Grants is possibly even

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more amazing. Letters, written while his father was minister at London during the war, are regrettably omitted as having been previously published. Thus we are deprived of further light on perhaps the most dramatic period of the author's life, so vividly described in the *Education*.

The writer mellows with the years, becomes less self-conscious and more humorous. Certainly his observations are always remarkably keen, but they improve with time, probably because he was more content simply to observe. There is little evidence of the overweening conceit which has been charged against him; on the contrary there is much evidence of a notable power to gain and sustain the friendship of distinguished men and women. Most entertaining for the general reader are the letters from Japan and the South Seas, to which Adams took John La Farge in the eighties. Travelling like a prince, dispensing double eagles right and left, Adams renewed his youth watching Polynesian maidens dance, seemed not to have ruined his digestion sampling the native foods, and all the while observed as keenly as an anthropologist but more humorously.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

AN AMERICAN EPOCH: SOUTHERN PORTRAITURE IN THE NATIONAL PICTURE *by Howard W. Odum* (HOLT. $3.50)

MR. ODUM'S work is in many respects so excellent that one hesitates to find fault with it. Yet *An American Epoch* does not entirely live up to its admirable intention to present an unprejudiced portrait of all the elements that make up the South. For Mr. Odum the trained observer of society frequently joins forces with Mr. Odum the author of *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*; and the latter has an incurable interest in the picturesque. The total impression left by *An American Epoch* is that of a South inhabited principally by down-at-the-heel colonels, singing Negroes and political or religious bigots. Mr. Odum says that this is not the whole story; but, once he has made a bow to the plain man, he passes rapidly to the more alluring folk-songs or Catholic-baiting. Mr. Odum tends to see things lyrically: he turns from sentimental evocation of colonial columns and magnolias to ecstatic citation of statistics dealing with industrial expansion and good roads. Consequently, strong contrasts abound in his picture and the more substantial middle ground is frequently neglected, though not denied.

Despite such neglect, no one will combat the accuracy of Mr. Odum's details, or claim that he has actually omitted important elements. The bias which leads Mr. Odum to devote a whole chapter to religious folk-music and another, called "Creative Effort", almost entirely to the work of sociologists, is all the more regrettable because the author had the opportunity, and ability, to insist on more fundamental things. It cannot, however, spoil the book's value. Mr. Odum has gone a long way, if not all the way; he presents at least some of the materials on which intelligent and effective criticism will have to be based. He offers much that should commend itself to Southerners, those who are still regional-minded as well as those who are not, and to anyone who is interested in the South and its grave problems.

EUGENE ARMFIELD

THE PATH TO PEACE *by Nicholas Murray Butler* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

WHEN Nicholas Murray Butler speaks, America listens, not always with agreement, always with respect. With the weight of Columbia University and the Carnegie Foundation behind his utterances, which are informed with a vigorous and transparent idealism, winged with learning and with practical experience, his voice has been among the most persuasive of those raised in behalf of active coöperation with other nations in the interests of peace. Here are collected his speeches and public

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writings over a period of four years, from the inception of the Kellogg Pact to his recent addresses to the German Reichstag and in London. They include his famous letter to the New York *Times* on April 25, 1927, inviting us to respond to M. Briand's overture for the outlawry of war between France and the United States. Dr. Butler is a vigorous and a convinced internationalist. He has little patience with the mood of self-respecting detachment from European commitments which has moulded Washington's policy since the days when the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles. He asserts that

> . . . it is a paradox but a truth that, despite the overwhelming sentiment of the people of the United States, the Government of the United States has for some years past been a chief obstacle to every movement to make war unlikely and to advance the cause of international peace.

It is on this "truth" that many sincerely pacific Americans part company with the President of Columbia University. Peace is built in two ways, by institutions—as in the League of Nations and M. Briand's diplomacy—and by general consent—as in the Treaties of Washington and London and in the Kellogg Pact. In other words, peace is built in the hearts of men as well as in the sheriff's handcuffs. With this one exception, however, there is nothing in Dr. Butler's philosophy to which exception can be taken. Few men of sense will quarrel over the means which are advocated for the maintenance of world peace, so long as the end is kept before us. That end is still the prevention of another world war; the means is to create a system of political justice which will render the appeal to force unnecessary. Dr. Butler is a prophet of peace, but a prophet who feels that peace itself is political justice and that the means of securing peace are more adequately embodied in the political institutions at Geneva than in the possibly transitory good will of the common man which motivates contemporary American policy.

PROPHETS OF THE NEW INDIA *by Romain Rolland* (BONI. $5.00)

RECONSTRUCTING INDIA *by Edward Thompson* (DIAL PRESS. $4.00)

INDIA AND THE SIMON REPORT *by Sir John Simon* (COWARD-MCCANN. $.75)

EVERY few centuries Asia has an idea. When it does, the West is troubled. The idea may be that of a Christ, a Buddha, a Mahomet, or that of an Attila, a Genghis Khan, or a Lenin. Whatever it is and however it comes, it stirs the world. Asia is today troubled with a half-formulated thought, a philosophy for which Bolshevism is too strong and Nationalism too weak a word. The idea, whatever it is, flickers from Korea to the High Atlas and from the High Pamirs to Cape Cormorin. Nowhere is its expression more significant than in India.

And on no subject is American public opinion less informed and less responsible than on Indian Nationalism. So far as we think about India at all, we have a hazy sort of notion that the Indians ought to be free and ask what the British are doing there anyhow. For the past few years, both Indians and British have made increasing efforts to lay their cases before the American public, for American sympathies, if misdirected, are capable of working a tremendous injustice upon Asia. Are we to condemn the Indians with Miss Mayo, because they are given to practices not regarded with favor on Main Street? Or are we to condemn the British because Ghandi has made the rotogravure sections? Or shall we really attempt to understand the staggering human problems involved in the political status of the 300,000,000 people crowded into the wedge of land between the Himilayas and the sea?

Here are three books really calculated to broaden our sympathies without enlisting our prejudices. M. Rolland has written an account of the two great religious leaders of the Hindu awakening—Ramakrishna, who was regarded in his lifetime as the reincarnation of the Divinity, and Vivekananda, who was the

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Saul of Tarsus of the Hindu revival. Their lives embraced the period, roughly, from the end of the rule of the East India Company to Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. Of the two, Ramakrishna embodies Hindu mysticism at its best and purest, Vivekananda Hinduism at its most virile. Vivekananda's two missions to the West brought out in sharp relief the conflict between Hindu mysticism and Occidental materialism, which is at the heart of the Asian conflict today; his work quickened the movement led by Tagore and Ghose, which produced Ghandi. To understand Hindu Nationalism you should read this book.

Indian Nationalism is something different, however. Mr. Thompson's candid and fair-minded book reminds us of the great gap in the Indian movement for independence, the gap which the agitation of a handful of brilliant men has hitherto concealed, the practical impossibility of effective self-rule and the practical necessity for British coöperation. As he rightly points out, "there is no reason why the public, especially the American public, should be allowed to believe that the British administrator has done nothing through the years but fleece and oppress a noble populace". Granted that the Indians have a legitimate grievance over many things, such as the Amritsar affair and the "Black Cobra" Bills, and granted that the British have solid commercial and political advantages in their Indian Empire, certain stubborn facts must be overcome before Indian self-government is practicable. These difficulties are, succinctly: the 60,000,000 Moslems who are often embroiled with the Hindu majority; the seven hundred native Princes who rule a quarter of the people and nearly a half of the area of India and who do not intend to submit to the rule of Bengali doctrinaires; the people of the Punjab, the United Provinces and Nepal, who have contributed the vast majority of the Indian Army and who might not be prepared to protect indefinitely such a province as Bengal, which does not contribute a single man to the defense of India; and finally the division of caste, race and language which paralyzes the Peninsula. These are the things which prompt the author, an Englishman who has lived and worked in India, to insist that

> . . . immediate, full Dominion Status would merely make a fool of India, or, rather, put her where she cannot help making a fool of herself (and an extremely unhappy fool). Independent India would be like Independent China, but far more torn and wretched, even more ridiculous a spectacle to the outside world.

As Sir John Simon points out, the problem of the British—and really of the entire West—in their dealings with Asia is not to endorse principles but to create institutions:

> You cannot put a slogan into an Act of Parliament. A constitution is more than that. It is a work of architecture, like a great cathedral, which must indeed embody noble aspirations, but must stand on solid earth, and be designed to resist all the strains and stresses that will assail it, and to give room and protection not to one section but to all manner of people.

Stripped of its Non-Conformist touch, this is solid truth. The Simon Report is one of the great political documents of our day. Sir John's booklet on the subject is a suitable introduction to a fuller understanding of the political problem involved when a great Empire is asked to turn 300,000,000 helpless peasants loose and to expect them to behave as though they were capable of an orderly, responsible, self-governing career such as India has never known in all her millennia of recorded history.

JOHN CARTER

PIONEERS OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

by Frederick D. Kershner (BOBBS-MERRILL. $3.00)

SINCE apparently no one else, to feed our appetite for quick and painless culture, had been inspired to write the "story" of theology, Dr. Kershner, who is the dean of the College of Religions at Butler University, has come

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to our rescue at last. Doubtless by merely amplifying his college lecture notes he has compressed into a handy volume an account of Christian thought, both orthodox and heretical, both Catholic and Protestant, from its beginnings into the nineteenth century. His position is that of a dissenting Protestant, but being tempered with so much liberal progressivism as to have lost all vital connection with the thought ushered in by the Reformation, it would be better classed as that of a harmless neutral. Of the elder theologians he favors whoever was most "modern", and so is the champion of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Abelard. On the other hand, he carries on a guerilla warfare against the standard church fathers, particularly St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, first attacking them in the name of modern enlightenment, then riding swiftly away on the admission that as theologians they have not, after all, been surpassed.

Dr. Kershner nowhere reveals an understanding of the inner religious problems which agitated the great men about whom he writes, and leads us to suspect therefore that he has no real understanding of the systems of religious thought that they sought to erect. But his book is well larded with facts, its opinions do no damage, and it is put together with even more than the usual amount of classroom humor.

GERALD SYKES

AS WE WERE *by E. F. Benson* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $4.00)

"A VICTORIAN PEEP SHOW" is the deprecating sub-title to this generous volume of memories by the son of a famous Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the brood of literary Bensons. It is at once charming in its sentiment and shrewd in its satire. It sparkles with flashes of critical insight and good-humored wit. Indeed, it is so good for what it attempts that it challenges criticism for not having attempted more. Having presented us with much more than a peep show, Mr. Benson might have given us a brilliant and illuminating history. For example, there is evidence that he is critically aware of the social evils that the ostrich-like attitude of the Victorian régime permitted to flourish, the rapid demoralization of the English working class that was growing apace, the stark destitution and stinking disintegration under which most of Ireland lay prostrate. He tells how the good Queen, herself, could not bear exposure to poverty with its attendant evils, filth, squalor, moral degradation. Her remedy, he tells us, was not to think about it. Mr. Benson might have tackled Victorian politics in the same light, delightful, but trenchant and ironic style that he uses in dealing with Victorian art, or (unfairly, as I think) in dealing with the literary achievements and subsequent reputation of Oscar Wilde.

Although nearly all the great Victorian names appear in these pages they are not dragged in. Mr. Benson is at home in the world of political leaders and of art and letters. There are first-hand stories of Tennyson and Browning, of Gladstone and Edward VII, of Cambridge dons now become legendary, and of good and bad painters. The book is too good to be offered as a mere volume of anecdote. But one fails to detect beneath the distinguished style the intimate knowledge of surfaces, the English wit and humor, the beating pulse of philosophic history.

FRED T. MARSH

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ACHIEVEMENT *by Walter B. Pitkin* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $4.00)

THIS book is popular science, but not of the innocuous type which serves up carefully worked out ideas in elementary form. It has a serious motive. It recognizes a problem which demands close scientific study, but attempts to solve it on a popular journalistic

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level—which is a precedent carefully to be shunned by science, especially by psychology, which has all it can do to keep its name pure. To attempt to solve a serious scientific problem in terms comprehensible to the layman is a hazardous practice which is likely to result in a compromise that favors specious, well-sounding explanation.

Dr. Pitkin undertakes to treat a question that must more and more forcibly gain the attention of modern society—namely, how to correct the condition in which a potential man of achievement must flounder aimlessly about waiting for an opportunity to use his capacities, meanwhile wasting them in irrelevant activity. The first step, as Dr. Pitkin sees it, is to analyze the factors of personality that are requisite for achievement and, this done, to provide a school to train for leadership in every field. Dr. Pitkin is sound in so far as he sees the problem, but his analysis of the factors of achievement, which constitutes all but the introduction and postlude of the book, is shabby and obvious. It is thoroughly journalistic. Charts, statistics, citations, case histories and all the forms of scientific psychology are employed, but to no real purpose. The thinking is incomplete, loosely organized and superficial.

LEO T. HURWITZ

THE GIANT OF THE WESTERN WORLD *by Francis Miller and Helen Hill* (MORROW. $3.00)

OBVIOUSLY our "Giant" is the United States, but what immediately concerns the two authors of this book more than America's phenomenal rise to world power, is the development of a new North Atlantic civilization. Their study is that of the interaction of American and European forces, especially in the economic field, which before our eyes is giving rise to a new world organization and a new culture which centers upon the Atlantic much as the civilization of Rome centered upon the Mediterranean.

As we are being told so often, the astounding success of our development of the principle of mass production has made the United States the predominant factor in this new civilization. We go to Europe for our traditions, but Europe comes to us for all the material things of life. Mass production demands world markets, and in our conquest of these markets we have irresistibly drawn Europe into our orbit. "Society around the basis of the North Atlantic," the authors declare, "receives its cohesion from the self-expressed network of unsatisfied wants which unites the peasant of the Rhineland with the villager of the Mississippi in one all-inclusive consumer's communism."

But it is the tragic paradox of this situation that while every economic force emphasizes the growing community of interest between America and Europe, our official policy is one of blind self-sufficiency. We talk of "no foreign entanglements" and erect tariff walls. How long this can continue no one can say, but what the authors of this book fear is that some day we shall find ourselves faced with a situation which may mean war when we should have played a rôle commensurate with our power in so shaping events that such a crisis need never have arisen. The first condition of peace, it is their contention, is the adoption of a foreign policy which can direct international business into coöperative non-political channels; the second, a program for the internationalization of the High Seas. The alternative is the gradual development of a new balance of power, and "the whole tragedy of European history will then be repeated on a world scale".

However one may judge the authors' conclusions, their book is a readable and provocative summary of this interplay of economic, political and cultural forces across the North Atlantic. It throws so penetrating a light upon our new international rôle that we could wish this country internationally-minded enough to make it a best seller.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

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LIFE IN ELIZABETHAN DAYS *by William Stearns Davis* (HARPERS. $3.50)

THOSE readers, and there must by now be a very great number, who recall Mr. Davis's *Life on a Mediæval Barony* will need small introduction to the present volume, *Life in Elizabethan Days*. With the same clarity, simplicity and scholarly thoroughness which made his earlier book memorable, he has investigated the social life of an English community of the sixteenth century. By selecting a typical social unit, and examining the varied aspects of the individual life contained in it, he has reconstructed the life of an age. The present volume, although its results reflect less obvious credit upon the author, has been a far larger labor. Mr. Davis has given us here a cross section of a social organization infinitely more complex and more fluid than the mediæval barony.

Mr. Davis has not attempted in this book to discuss Tudor London, urging with justice that the metropolitan aspects of Elizabethan life have been very carefully covered. He begins his narrative in the town of Boroughport, a seaport in the south of England, a city of perhaps six thousand inhabitants and one of the larger centers of population in that still sparsely settled island. Boroughport and the neighboring agricultural village of Hollydean, together with the manorial holdings of Sir Walter Hollydean, the most influential gentleman in that particular section of Thorpshire, compose Mr. Davis's social unit. It embraces at some point all other aspects of Elizabethan life. With the Hollydean family as a starting point, Mr. Davis penetrates upward through the ranks of the nobility, who were not yet so numerous or so powerful as they were to become and downward through the ranks of the yeomanry, the burghers, the tradesmen, tenant farmers and hired laborers.

His work is founded upon an important and rather neglected historical truth—that in the life of a people the major trends governing the activities of an age, its religious, political, social, or economic concepts in the large, are less significant and revealing than the smaller and more personal aspects of those trends which bear directly and constantly upon the life of the individual. We are infinitely closer to understanding an Elizabethan gentleman like Sir Walter Hollydean when we know how he made the money to restore Hollydean Hall, what he wore to a ball and what he ate for dinner, how often he took a bath, and what he did for a cold in the head, how many servants he had, how he regarded the homilies of his chaplain, and how he felt and what hobgoblin superstitions assailed him when he rode past a graveyard on a dark night. When we know these same things not only about Sir Walter and his immediate family, but about his friend, the Lord Mayor of Boroughport, about Jack Mattock, his cottager, about Dame Motherwell, the midwife, and Hal Liftpurse, the highwayman, we have a fairly good working knowledge of the social life of the Elizabethan age. We may proceed more confidently from Mr. Davis's book to an examination of the sweeping generalizations propounded by historians with less vital imaginative faculties.

MARGARET WALLACE

ORPHEUS: MYTHS OF THE WORLD *by Padraic Colum* (MACMILLAN. $5.00)

THE publication of a book recounting the mythology of the earlier world is noteworthy and valuable, whatever deficiencies may be discovered in the book. It would seem easy to believe, ordinarily, that persons acquainted with English literature would be well versed in, at least, Grecian mythology. Unfortunately, the belief is often ungrounded. For those who would extend their knowledge of mythology, Padriac Colum's *Orpheus* can serve a good purpose.

It can, in fact, supply a need; the pity is that it does not supply that need more fully.

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With the excellent manner of recounting the tales there is nothing to quarrel. The illustrations and decorations by Boris Artzybasheff are regrettable, for they are completely out of key and obtrusive. A more compact and full book could have been made from the material Mr. Colum must have had and the amount of paper the publishers have put into the book. In spite of these drawbacks, the inclusiveness of the book and the fact that such a book is now available to the general public cannot be overlooked. Mr. Colum's anthology suffers from the defect all anthologies congenitally suffer from: it is not, in every respect, what one would prefer it to be.

KENNETH WHITE

THE AMERICAN ROAD TO CULTURE
by George S. Counts (JOHN DAY. $2.50)

ONCE AGAIN Professor Counts has scored heavily with a well-timed volume; the high value of his present effort may be attributed to the fact that in it he concerns himself not with the theories of professors of education but with the practices of American schools.

It is the school which is the American road to culture. In that institution, in its organization and operation, are reflected the principles underlying the standards of value and the basic beliefs of the American public. Americans, says Professor Counts, believe by and large in the principle of individual success, which has led to the placing upon education of a definite money value, and has been conducive to the overcrowding of our higher institutions of learning. Americans adhere to the principle of democracy in education, which has emphasized the rôle of environment and training in the achievement of individual success, and has thrust the burden of such training upon the school. They accept the desirability of social conformity; in its interests, too great a deviation from the social norm has been discouraged; it has brought about discriminations against minority groups in the school and an intolerance toward change. Americans believe in efficiency—personal, social, mechanical: consequently, they have encouraged scientific study of our schools. As a result, our schools have been reorganized, courses of studies have been revised and methods of teaching altered. Particularly in curriculum-revision has emphasis been placed upon the strictly utilitarian, in which Americans have great faith; education has been regarded by the revisers "as an instrument, rather than as a way of life". In outlining the function of the school, they have used the words "should" and "must" most frequently. One of the many things which the American school should and must do is to improve, in a general way, both the individual and society. And there, Professor Counts believes, lies the crux of the matter. The United States can point to no social planning, no program of social improvement. How, then, can the school have a social program? Socially and educationally, our country suffers from "philosophic uncertainty". Socially and educationally, America needs "courageous grappling" with the thinking-through of the implications of our age; only such thinking will impart real leadership to American education.

IRVING ASTRACHAN

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FLEDGLING FICTION

THAT BARRABAS LEGEND

We have it on the authority of Byron that Barrabas was a publisher, and a myriad of poets and novelists after him have credited and duly echoed the tale. For myself, I have no doubt of its truth, even though the Bible offers no corroboration. It was, therefore, gratifying to encounter in an ancient volume of bookish legends the following account, which, pleasing in itself, is also valuable for the light it casts upon the literary world of today.

It appears that the Father of Publishing had felt no interest in letters during the time he walked among men. It was only after spending an endless period of Plutonian boredom that the thought of dabbling in literature came to him. He had always loved books, he told himself, and publishing was fascinating work which required no special training—merely a flair, he thought, coining a phrase which was destined to endure. He pondered awhile over the question of a fitting name for his enterprise. What a pity he was childless. Barrabas and Son! There would be a name for you! Well, Barrabas and Company was little inferior; and, that decided, he set out to find suitable partners for his undertaking.

He found them with little difficulty. There was one Ananias, who on earth had evinced talents which admirably qualified him to take charge of the Advertising and Publicity. There was Judas—not perhaps of executive calibre, but such as he would always be useful around a publishing house. And so he went through the more select shadows of the nether world, choosing this or that likely candidate, and finding none to whom the prospect of entering the publishing business did not appeal with an intense if irrational allure. At the end of the day his staff was completely organized, and there remained only one Shade for whom he was unable to find a suitable post. This was that Thomas who had doubted.

It was at this moment that Judas first demonstrated his value to the new organization. "We might," he suggested, "make him a critic."

I had forgotten this anecdote until the other day, when I happened upon a work entitled *Best Seller* (Bobbs-Merrill. $2.00), by one who calls himself anagrammatically A. N. Youmans and shall here remain anonymous. This is a novel—to quote the publishers—"about a young man who comes to New York to write a novel about a young man who comes to New York to write a novel", and as fiction it is of negligible worth. But to the student of letters, rather of the Business of Letters, it is worth its weight in a metal infinitely more precious than gold. For our young man got himself a job in a publishing house and in moments which were not devoted to writing his novel or attempting the seduction of various young ladies, he watched the wheels go around. In this story they revolve before us, their speed unmitigated, their noise unhushed. I will not say that *Best Seller* is a wholly accurate picture of publishing. There are times when I seem to detect a note of exaggeration. There are times when I fear that an element of ribald mockery has crept into the book. But to one who knows the publishing business, the book comes with a discomforting familiarity. The crassness, the vulgarity, the helplessness and ignorance, are here displayed in

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their quintessential purity such as no publisher ever quite achieves—and yet, just as one utters this reassuring reservation, one reads the Sunday advertising sections or studies the blurbs upon say a dozen new novels, or learns of some magnificent new idiocy which has been perpetrated in the name of book publishing—and the shadow of Barrabas and Company once more lies heavily over the entire industry. No, unhappily *Best Seller* is not exaggerated to the point of libel. It is for that reason, in part, that I should commend a reading of it to any one who contemplates writing a book.

The theme of the young man who comes to New York to write a novel is, I suppose, the favorite among beginning writers. Happily, the majority of such effusions is suppressed in publishing offices, and the existence of the occasional survivor is often justified by its merits. There is, for example, ample justification for the existence of *The Man from Limbo* by S. Guy Endore (Farrar & Rinehart. $2.00). This is, in fact, a persuasive and ingenious handling of a difficult motif: that of a man whose imagination is played upon by the fancied career of an acquaintance lately dead. In the grip of this fancy, Mark Kling, the narrator, writes the life story of the dead man, building it of scraps of paper, of distorted memories of his own career, and of his own thwarted impulses and desires. It may be that one admires the virtuosity of the author more than one is moved by the book itself; that the whole thing is a *tour de force*, making little demand upon the reader's imagination or emotions. Yet there are moments when the inner story of the dead Redlands and his fantastic preoccupation with a secret family treasure assumes the proportions of an immediate reality, when he and his father and their lust for platinum acquire a nightmare vividness. And always upon the story is the mark of the skilled workman—one who writes a fluent prose, who understands and has mastered the art of narration.

Mr. J. C. Grant, the author of *The Back-to-Backs* (Cape & Smith. $2.00) secures his dramatic and nightmare effects more easily. He has written a story of life in an English mining town, a place in which men and women worn down by hideous toil, relapse into brutishness. Mr. Grant at times succeeds in communicating to his readers some sense of the horror of the place and some share in his own indignation that it should exist. Nevertheless his indignation is his undoing; he is too clearly aware of the sordid character of his scene, too anxious to comment upon the iniquity of its existence, to permit the reader to savor its quality for himself. The book has the remote reality of a newspaper account; one does not doubt its truth but its human values elude one.

This failure to evoke a realization of human values I find present in another sordid tale, *Dog Lane* by Lev Gomilevsky (Vanguard Press. $2.00). This is a story of the New Russia, of a group of Communists who have attempted to relegate human love to an appetite. Here we have rationalism carried to the point of madness; we see men and women, otherwise intelligent, pathetically begging love's favors as a hungry man would ask a casual meal from an acquaintance. The result of this blind nosing after sexual gratification is disaster, but one so devoid of tragic dignity that it verges on burlesque.

Lord, when shall we be delivered from the tyranny of the love story? It is a relief to turn to a book which is concerned primarily with a pursuit of another kind than the amorous. *Dixon's Cubs* by John C. Moore (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00) manages, without belying human nature, to portray a very attractive family group during adolescence and early maturity and to place a minimum of emphasis on the love affairs of the principal characters. It is a book marked by that passionate love of the countryside which one often encounters in English novels. Indeed the background and atmosphere rather usurp the leading place, staying agreeably in the

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mind after the story and the characters have become nebulous memories.

Upon the same plane of unpretentious merit is Willson Whitman's flavorsome novel *Contradance* (Bobbs-Merrill. $2.00), a story of New Orleans in the first half of the last century, which is, in fact, a free fantasia upon the life of an actual person, John McDonogh, a merchant who is now remembered as the donor of free schools in Baltimore and New Orleans. The latter city was and is a glamorous place; and some of that glamour has crept into the pages of Miss Whitman's novel. McDonogh comes on the scene at twenty-one, a merchant adventurer, with a touch of the swaggerer, even of the exquisite, in him, destined obviously for triumph of a sort. But as the book progresses he meets with every failure except the material kind, bungling his love affairs, forced within himself by embitterment, his finest impulses misunderstood. This slow march toward defeat is well handled in its external aspects, but the author is less successful in dealing with McDonogh's changing character. He alters by flashes rather than, as in life, by a process continuous and imperceptible, and long before the end of the book he has become a wholly alien figure. This defect keeps the book from being the substantial performance which one might expect after reading the opening chapters. Yet it has dignity and charm and honesty, and these are no inconsiderable merits.

It is not easy to do justice to Marion Patton's *Dance on the Tortoise* (Dial Press. $2.00), a novel which, although built upon a simple framework of incident, pursues its course into a region of obscure impulses and beliefs, which is difficult to penetrate and more difficult to describe. Miss Patton writes felicitously; many of her scenes are moving; two at least are impressive. But the book lacks clarity and direction. Struggling in the wake of the heroine's bewildered emotional progress, one knows only a sense of irritation, of disappointment. There is the promise of beauty and meaning in the book but neither has quite come into being.

The publishers of *Parade Ground* by Jacquelin Deitrick (Doubleday, Doran. $1.00), assure the reader that "You are in this book". I am sorry. I have searched and searched but I do not find me, and I am forced to ascribe the statement to the Barrabas tradition. The book itself has merits. It is an interesting and perhaps accurate picture of American army life. It faithfully records the speech and I suspect the attitudes of people who are slightly subnormal mentally. But it is over long; its account of the heroine's alcoholic and amatory experiences soon grows monotonous; and when it comes to deal with actual human emotions it is naïve when not positively childish. The author has an undisciplined talent which may amount to something.

There are good things in *Gringo* by C. G. W. Gordon (Doubleday, Doran. $1.00), notably the descriptions of life in South American mining camps, but the book suffers through the author's attempt to turn it into a story of marriage. . . . *Bandar-Log* by A. W. Smith (Little, Brown. $2.00) is one of the few really readable Anglo-Indian novels I have encountered in a long while, peopled in part by some exceedingly convincing Eurasians. . . . *Son of Minos* by David Cheney (McBride. $2.00) is a pleasant but rather tenuous retelling of the story of King Minos of Crete. . . . And *Those Hitch Hikers* by Booth Jameson (Bobbs-Merrill. $2.00) is deft light comedy in the best *Saturday Evening Post* manner.

GUY HOLT

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

Lest there be some critical habitués of this page who may have from time to time deprecated your reporter's boast that this Monthly Score is a far more accurate index of popular reading tastes than any set of bookseller's reports can possibly be, let me bring forth some corroborative evidence, from the recent volume by Mr. R. L. Duffus, entitled *Books: Their Place in a Democracy.*

"Though the libraries have so far failed to make us a book-reading nation," says Mr. Duffus, "they have been more successful in getting books read than have the publishers and booksellers. Habitual book-buyers probably number not more than four or five percent of the population, whereas libraries, where they exist at all, reach between twenty-five and fifty percent, and sometimes even more, of the population."

—F.P.S.

NOVELS

1. CIMARRON	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
2. THE SCARAB MURDER CASE	*S. S. Van Dine*	SCRIBNER'S
3. LAUGHING BOY	*Oliver La Farge*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
4. ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
5. EXILE	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
6. ROGUE HERRIES	*Hugh Walpole*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
7. THE DOOR	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	FARRAR & RINEHART
8. THE SELBYS	*Anne Green*	DUTTON
9. GREAT MEADOW	*Elizabeth Madox Roberts*	VIKING
10. CHANCES*	*A. Hamilton Gibbs*	LITTLE, BROWN
11. A LANTERN IN HER HAND	*Bess Streeter Aldrich*	APPLETON
12. YOUNG MAN OF MANHATTAN	*Katharine Brush*	FARRAR & RINEHART

GENERAL

1. BYRON	*André Maurois*	APPLETON
2. THE GREEN PASTURES	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART
3. THE HUMAN MIND	*Karl Menninger*	KNOPF
4. NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
5. JOURNEY'S END	*R. C. Sherriff*	BRENTANO
6. THE TRAGIC ERA	*Claude G. Bowers*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
7. THE ART OF THINKING	*Ernest Dimnet*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
8. TREATISE ON THE GODS	*H. L. Mencken*	KNOPF
9. GRANDMOTHER BROWN'S HUNDRED YEARS	*Harriet Connor Brown*	LITTLE, BROWN
10. A PREFACE TO MORALS	*Walter Lippmann*	MACMILLAN
11. THE RAVEN	*Marquis James*	BOBBS-MERRILL
12. THE MEANING OF CULTURE*	*John Cowper Powys*	NORTON

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.*

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